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New Brunswick government starts major prison reform

Alan Doerksen

FREDERICTON, N.B. — The New Brunswick government has started a three-year plan of reforms that will dramatically change that province's prison system. The plan will provide alternatives to jail, which New Brunswick Solicitor General Jane Barry says is "a revolving door" for many offenders.

"The need for change is obvious," says Barry. "Our crime rate is falling in Canada and in New Brunswick. In fact, New Brunswick's crime rate is 20 per cent lower than the national rate. Yet 20 per cent more of our citizens are sentenced to serve time in provincial adult institutions. In many of these cases, there was no risk to society. It's the taxpayer who is punished when we unnecessarily send offenders to jail."

Provincial government figures show that the average cost per prisoner is $27,500 a year. This compares to $48,000 a year in Ontario and $41,000 in B.C.

Older prisons will close

In a document called "Achieving a Balance for Community and Correctional Services," the Solicitor General's office outlines its plans to scale down the use of prisons and to offer alternative programs. Starting in September, the province plans to close most of its older prisons, some of which are more than 100 years old. Other adult prisons will be realigned to offer new programs.

The older jails will be replaced by community-based training programs. A new risk/needs assessment process is being started for offenders that will include anger management, substance abuse treatment, and job readiness training. Some of these will be offered at the New Brunswick Youth Centre, a rehabilitative, educational and treatment centre that will open in the second year of the plan. Some adult offenders placed in a community setting will be monitored electronically so that their whereabouts is always known.

Offenders can do community work

The "Fine Option Program" allows offenders who can't afford to pay fines the opportunity to work for non-profit community groups like the YMCA instead of going to jail.

By reducing the number of adult institutional beds from 412 to 315, and group home beds from 63 to 36, the government expects to free up $5.4 million in operating costs. This money will be reinvested in foster home services, in offering more intensive supervision of young offenders and in hiring more probation officers. For instance, a probation officer designated as a specialist for women offenders will be hired in Saint John.

In view of the changes, the New Brunswick government expects to re-deploy some of its employees and offer early retirement and severance packages to others.

Brian Saunders, executive director of the John Howard Society of New Brunswick, likes the government's approach to prison reforms. "They want to make jail the last option. It fits very nicely with our philosophy."

Prisons are not effective for rehabilitation and there is a problem with repeat offenders, says Saunders. "People should not be coming back over and over again."

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Saunders approves of the Fine Option Program. The new community service programs will not replace paid labor, he notes. The John Howard Society already helps with community service programs for offenders and wants continued involvement.

Saunders thinks that closing

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Athletes in Action develops kids' sports skills and spirituality

JANE OUWEHAND

These boys are trying for as many baskets as possible in 15 seconds

Jane Ouwehand

CHILLIWACK, B.C. — "Every kid comes away a better basketball player, in addition to learning about Christ," says Athletes in Action coach Stefan Da Silva.

The purpose of Athletes in Action is "the athletic, character and spiritual development of kids, teens and coaches," according to Becky Jenion, assistant to the provincial coordinator of Athletes in Action.

After one day of soccer day camp in Chilliwack's Townsend Park, Nick Piechotta would recommend it to a friend. "It's pretty cool," he says. "I learned about dribbling, passes, juggling with feet and head; things like that." One of the parents, Barb Kolkman, says, "I am always very impressed with [Athletes in Action]. They're not worried about who's the best. Everybody's good. They're very positive." Her older two children have gone for several years, and now her third is in soccer.

Athletes in Action, a program

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Prison reform makes jail the last option

COURTESY N.B. SOLICITOR GENERAL'S OFFICE

New Brunswick Solicitor General Jane Barry

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the old prisons is a good idea. "Some of the prisons date back 150 years. All you have to do is walk through them to see they have to go."

He admits that some correctional employees will lose their jobs because of the changes. "The union membership should be alright" but casual employees may lose their jobs.

He also notes that the training and treatment programs are not completely new, but "more of an expansion of what's been done in the past."

So far, the prison reform program is on track. In September, jails in Fredericton, Richibucto and Tracadie will be closed. Saunders notes that New Brunswick has only 450 to 500 adult offenders and about 100 young offenders at present.

Rick Prashaw of the Church Council on Justice and Corrections (based in Ottawa) also believes the new program is "a good move, a good use of taxpayers' money." He describes putting offenders in jail as "warehousing."

"Jail is hurting people who are incarcerated." Prashaw says there is a serious problem of repeat offenders. A better option than jail is to spend money on long-term crime prevention.

Prashaw likes the Fine Option Program because the offender is made responsible for some payback and restitution. With community service, "we get something back in return."

But Prashaw criticizes the use of electronic monitoring of offenders as "technological hardware sold as great cost savings.... I'm not sure that it's going to be an improvement."

A spokesperson for another prison ministry, based in Ontario, says she especially likes New Brunswick's focus on community service. "I think there should be more of it," she says. Offering specialized training and treatment programs to offenders is a good idea, she says. She approves of electronic monitoring of offenders outside of prisons. This, she believes, would be especially appropriate for sexual assault offenders on parole.

Ontario government considers introducing 'super-prisons'

Alan Doerksen (with files from *The Toronto Star*)

OTTAWA — The Ontario government is considering replacing Ontario's 45 jails and correctional centres with 12 new "super-prisons." In late August, the *Toronto Star* reported that it had obtained Ontario government documents calling for major cost-cutting measures for Ontario's prison system.

The plan would involve spending $620 million to construct the new prisons over the next six years. But yearly costs would be cut by reducing operating costs to $60 per prisoner per day from a present level of as much as $156 a day. Money would be saved through administration and staff cuts. About 2,100 correctional officer jobs would be cut, mainly through attrition.

A spokesperson for the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, which represents correctional officers, says nobody from the ministry has discussed the possible changes with the union.

The government is considering turning over all jail operations to the private sector, which it believes would result in huge savings. The ministry also plans to sell existing jails once they are phased out.

Several possible sites of new super-prisons are: just east of Metro Toronto, south of Barrie, and Timmins, Ont.

'A super-bad idea'

Rick Prashaw of the Church Council on Justice and Corrections comments, "I think it's a super-bad idea." The government is "looking at the 'bottom line'" but not at the needs of people.

Having a few super-jails would make it hard for families to visit offenders, says Prashaw. If super-jails are introduced, "they're obviously going to have a lot fewer employees. The last thing we need is for these people [offenders] to have less human contact. It dehumanizes the warehouses that pass for prisons."

Helping offenders reform their lives is more important than saving money in the prison system, says Prashaw. "It's in our own interest if they come out better than they go in."

Prashaw says the government plan may be a "trial balloon" sent out to get a reaction from the public.

A spokesperson for an Ontario prison ministry comments that the proposed super-prisons "would be just like warehousing the men and women.... Those super-jails will get overcrowded." Like Prashaw, she thinks that offenders would be more isolated because it would be harder for their families to visit them at the new jails. Although she says the revamped prison system could probably cut its costs, "cutting correctional officers is not the answer." But she agrees that closing older prisons is a good idea.

Coaches share testimonies at Athletes in Action camps

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of Campus Crusade for Christ, runs 84 camps involving 3,000 campers and 75 coaches and assistants, according to Jenion. Some of the sports included are soccer, baseball, wrestling and golf. Camps run in Victoria, Prince Rupert, Dawson Creek, Calgary, Edmonton, in the Okanagan Valley and all through the Lower Mainland. This summer they have expanded into Ontario, beginning with baseball and softball in Uxbridge, Pickering, New Dundee and Elmville. Most are day camps which run mornings or afternoons for one week, but five are intensive camps which meet all week long at Trinity Western University in Langley.

Improving as athletes and as people

What soccer coach Jamie Munday likes best is that "by the end of the week you see the progress, and not just in their skills. They realize we want to see them improve as people. They come to an understanding of why we play soccer: God gives us gifts, and he wants us to use our abilities for his glory in every way possible."

Munday explains that halfway through the morning they break for "time-out talk," and over drinks of water coaches share testimonies, "stories in our lives which we feel would help them. It's always exciting for me when I have a chance to share my testimony."

Munday was excitedly looking forward to a trip to Germany, France and Ireland with Athletes in Action. Campers from Northern Ireland come to the Republic for soccer camp. "By the end of the week, they put their differences aside." Many who are "looking for answers" are expected to attend: "They are so open to the gospel. Three hundred campers are expected in the camp in Ireland. It's an amazing opportunity," he says. He feels that hope is what they need, and that is why he is excited about sharing his faith in God in difficult circumstances.

Coaching, first-aid and talk about God

When Jenion is asked about qualifications of the coaches, she says most have been on their high school team and are now playing their sport at the college level. Some have coached Little League. All the coaches must present references which attest to a Christ-like character. At training they learn coaching skills, first aid and how to talk to kids about God.

Basketball coach Stefan Da Silva has been coaching since straight out of high school, and before that he was a camper. What he likes best is the kids. "Every week it's like a new experience. You get a different group of kids with different personalities. It's always different." Da Silva reports a fair number of conversions: "A minimum of one a week, and then there are the recommitments." He coaches campers from grades 7, 8 and 9 during their week on campus. Using the four spiritual laws integrated with stories about sports, he explains the gospel of Jesus to each group.

Athletes in Action keeps in touch with campers who desire follow-up, giving them a video, a Bible and a magazine, and referring them to a local youth pastor if they are willing.

Outside on the Trinity Western parking lot, eight groups of six to eight boys are honing their basketball skills. Mike Harris, from White Rock, who is going into Grade 12 has been coming for six years. "It's pretty terrific," he says, "I've been here six years and I always learn something new. They're always pushing you. If you're not working hard, they'll let you know about it. It's basketball from when you get up to when you go to bed."

Tested 'to the max'

In the future Harris would like to go to a university or college preferably a Christian one. As for whether he intends to coach Athletes in Action some day, Harris says, "Maybe I could slowly try and work my way up; start in the canteen or something. I'd like that a lot."

While campers learn about sports skills and about faith in Jesus, coaches also learn about Christian character. "Soccer is a training ground for life," says Munday. "Soccer pushes you to the limit. You are spiritually tested to the max. You are tested with your virtues and your temperament. But when you represent your faith, and Athletes in Action, in all you do, that's an even bigger responsibility than simply coaching a soccer team."

News

Now free, kidnapped missionary Ray Rising shares story of his captivity

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. (EP) — After being held by Communist rebels in Colombia for more than two years, missionary Ray Rising was set free June 17 (see CC July 12, p. 20).

"I was visiting poor families and giving children rides on the motorcycle and I was running late as usual," Rising said, recalling the afternoon of March 31, 1994. "The sun was going down; I was in a hurry to get home. I arrived at the back gate of the property a mile-and-a-half from our house. As I pulled up to the gate, a man walked in front of me and pulled a gun, and two men came up behind. They were waiting for me."

Rising was kidnapped by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the nation's oldest and largest rebel group. He was never told why he was taken. "I had more contact with the Colombian community than many of our other people did. I suppose I was more available," Rising surmised. He had worked for 25 years as a radio technician for the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) and its sister organization, Wycliffe Bible Translators. "

Later the kidnappers demanded a ransom which was not forthcoming. Most mission agencies, including Wycliffe, have a strict policy against paying ransom because meeting the demands of kidnappers would make every missionary a target. Rising understands and supports the policy but admitted, "When you're out in the woods and you hear helicopters and bombs dropping and machine gun fire and mortar fire, you wish someone would just pay and get you out of there."

800-day 'camp-out'

The heavily armed guerrilla group that held Rising hostage fled from government forces four times during his two years of captivity. The small group changed locations every 20 to 30 days. "I had some jungle camp training 25 years ago, and it was like being in jungle camp for 800 days. I slept outside, always in the woods, on a bed made of sticks with leaves for cushioning. I had a rain poncho put on top of that, a mosquito net, and a sheet of black plastic. They all lived the same way."

Rising was not mistreated. "Every time we moved they had to make me a new bed and set up camp. It was their responsibility to take care of me and feed me. They took turns cooking. One fellow had been a chef in a large plush hotel in Bogota and he was good at it."

Rising was determined to use his situation as a chance to share Christ with his captors. "I made

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Ray Rising

it my goal to share the Lord with them and give my testimony. The first four months were difficult because of the leadership. The first commandante wouldn't let anyone talk to me and threatened me if I talked to them. I prayed, 'Lord, how am I going to witness to these people if I can't talk to them?' And God changed that.

"The others who were with me wrote a letter to their superiors reporting the commandante's conduct with me. I didn't know what was going on, but on Aug. 2, 1994 — my birthday — his replacement showed up and gave me more freedom. It was a completely different atmosphere. I thanked the Lord for the birthday present."

Doing good wherever he could

After that Rising had many opportunities to speak with his captors, particularly when they were on guard duty with no one else around. "I made a drawing of a bridge (an illustration used for evangelism) and when I was drawing it one day a guard came up, a girl, and she said she wanted to read the Bible passages that accompanied the illustration. I had a Spanish New Testament and she read them all and understood the whole thing. I had her read John 4, the story of the woman at the well, and later on she came back and asked to read it again."

Rising also did what he could to make life more pleasant for the group. "The Lord said I needed to do good wherever I could," he explained. "I cut hair and gave injections. I fixed tape recorders with a pen knife, a piece of wire and a flashlight bulb. I soldered using a nail heated up in a gasoline stove. Swatting mosquitoes and soldering with a nail...; you ought to try that sometime." When Rising accidentally broke the lenses out of his reading glasses, he was able to repair them with dental floss and Superglue.

Plenty of time for Bible study

Rising said his captors rose before 5 a.m. each day so they could be ready to go before daybreak in case of an army attack. At 6 a.m. breakfast was served, then Rising was allowed to have unhurried morning devotions. "I'd usually study my New Testament for two or three hours and have a good time with the Lord. Lunch was at 11:00. I would exercise, doing pushups and situps and running around the inside of the camp if the weather was good. One day I had five of them jogging with me. Then before darkness we would have supper, and eight o'clock was lights out — candles out."

During the last year-and-a-half of his captivity Rising had access to a small radio and could listen to Christian station HCJB and to local news reports. He occasionally heard updates on his own situation. One night he heard a Voice of America broadcast featuring an interview with the wife of another missionary who is being held in Colombia, but he never had any other contact with or knowledge of other kidnapping victims.

Rising also wrote 68 letters, only five of which reached his wife, Doris, who worked as a teacher and translator. "They didn't mail them all," he explained. "I never received any mail, except 20 days before I was released I had a letter from somebody who was helping with the negotiations."

There were just a few other contacts from the outside world. Rising's poncho was sent to him, and later his New Testament. "It was an encouragement because I knew there was some contact being made."

On April 12 of this year, the group holding Rising moved near a river in an area closer to civilization. "Prior to that we had been way in the interior, in an area which has few inhabitants. There were no roads, railroads, telephones — nothing where I was. Just heavy woods."

On June 16 his captors told him there was a radio message ordering them to get him ready to go. "I asked them, 'You mean cold in a bag, or lukewarm?' They laughed and said, 'No, we don't do that.' I did that on purpose as a test. Everybody was happy. I had gotten used to watching their moods to see what was going to happen."

Rising's captors told him to gather up his things, taking only what he needed. Leaving in midmorning, they walked some 20 minutes on a muddy trail to a river, then traveled by boat, then got into a jeep, where Rising was blindfolded for a two- or three-hour drive. By then it was midnight and Rising was transfered to another group for a four-hour walk.

"We heard motorcycles and they told me to get off the road and hide. I hid in the bushes; somebody asked for me. I came out and recognized one of the motorcycle drivers and went with him. They had arranged a rendezvous."

After an hour-and-a-half on the motorcycle Rising was transfered to a truck for a three-hour drive to the small town of San Martin where he was able to telephone his wife. His sons piloted the plane that picked him up, flying to Bogota. Then it was home to the U.S.

Purified like gold

Though cut off from friends and family for two years, Rising said he never felt cut off from God. "At the beginning of this, I thought, 'The Lord is giving me some trials here.' He tells us in his Word that we will come through the trials purified like gold. Then he began to relate to me that I was suffering for him, and for my colleagues and for Bible translation. That was a great encouragement to me."

A medical check-up confirmed that Rising had come through his ordeal in good health. "The doctor kept asking me, 'How long did they have you?' I did lose two fillings in my teeth, and I prayed, 'Lord, please don't let them hurt' — and they didn't. I'm getting those taken care of now."

Rising plans to spend the next couple of years at his current home in North Carolina, but doesn't think his missionary days are done. "I'd love to go back," he concluded.

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Guest Editorial

The gospel speaks to both church and culture

Rem Kooistra

Recently, George R. Hunsberger and Calvin Seminary missiology professor Graig Van Gelder, edited a book consisting of a number of essays which deal with the role of the church in the world today. The book is called *The Church between Gospel and Culture: The Emerging Mission in North America.*

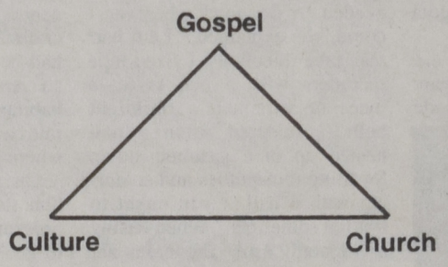
Being interested in both theology and sociology this book is of great interest to me. It uses a paradigm suggested by Bishop Lesslie Newbigin. (He produced a "triangular model of gospel culture relationships.")

Imagine a triangle resting on one of its sides. Write at the top the world "Gospel," at the left corner, "Culture" and the right corner, "Church."

When we look at this triangle, we notice various relationships. The gospel relates to culture and the church; culture relates to the gospel and the church; and finally, the church relates to the gospel and the culture.

Beginning with the gospel (Calvinists might use "Word of God" here), we can ask ourselves how the gospel relates to our culture. Does the gospel have a message for our culture?

In Acts 2, Peter tells his audience, after they discovered that they had crucified their Messiah,



"Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Eugene H. Peterson makes this message even more poignant when he translates it: "Get out of this sick and stupid culture!"

The real message of the gospel is highly critical of culture in general, and in particular, of our present-day, "post-modern" culture.

Why is our culture called post-modern? You'll find an extensive, popular explanation of this in the new book by J. Richard Middleton and Brian J. Walsh entitled *Truth Is Stranger Than It Used to Be.*

The tower came down

Modernism embodied the age of science in which the scientific method was god. A spirit of general optimism prevailed. We were going to have a "just society," with all benefitting from "progress." No more war, no more poverty. It would all fall into place. A new tower of Babel would arise.

Our dreams would finally become reality, thanks to modern technology.

But then came Vietnam, soup kitchens in every city, increasing violence, AIDS and a whole lot of despair. The tower came tumbling down once again and people (again) no longer understood each other. "Post-modernism" emerged.

There was no return to the Christian message as some Christians hoped and expected. The gospel was considered irrelevant. Today the "faith" of the masses seems to be: make money fast and have as much fun as you can — which is not much different from what people said in Isaiah's day: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!" Post-modern people are horizontal people; God and the gospel are not known. But the message of the gospel for our world today is still "Repent and be baptized."

The road to secularization

And what is the message of the gospel for the church? That seems to be a bit more complicated. To see what the church has done with the gospel we have to go back all the way to the time of Emperor Constantine. After his conversion in A.D. 312, he decreed (with good intentions) that the gospel would be the official state religion.

This Constantinian model has strongly influenced North American Christianity. Though neither the U.S. or Canada have a state church, the U.S. was even more explicit in being a "nation under God" than Canada was. But in Canada, too, we had (at least during the first half of the 20th century) a strongly "churched culture." However, as Kennon L. Callahan has remarked, "Those days are over." Our country and its culture are secular. The church has lost its role in public life; or tries to accommodate itself to the culture. Faith has been declared a private matter.

Too much at ease

Many church people today live in a schizophrenic scheme: They are post-modern in their public lives — in the bank, in business, in politics and in education, but in their private lives — in the church, in their families and their private devotions — they are saved by Jesus' blood. They manage to be "in the world" and to be partly "of the world," and partly not.

But now comes the gospel; if we're honest, it is very critical of the 20th century church. The gospel criticizes not only a post-modern culture, but also a church that is too much at ease in that culture. The gospel says, "You, church, must be a readable letter of Jesus."

Bishop Newbigin has a very astute way of saying this. He maintains that the church is "the hermeneutic of the message." It comes down to this: if people want to know what the Kingdom of God is all about they should be able to see at least a beginning of it in the church. More than anything else, the church should be the incarnation of God's Kingdom and kingship.

Living the message

The question remains: How does the gospel reach our culture and our church? I think that in the past, evangelism and missions were considered too much from the point of view of oral or written communication. Bishop Newbigin sees it this way: "The church represents it [the reign of God] as its community (koinonia), its servant (diakonia), and its messenger (kerygma)." This means not only that the church *proclaims* the message, but that the church *actively lives* the message, among its own members and in its service to the community.

This, of course, can happen only if the church is truly "alive in Christ" (Eph.2:5).

Dr. Rem Kooistra is a retired Christian Reformed campus pastor who lives in Waterloo, Ont.

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Letters

Discussion both encouraging and worrying

The recent discussion in Christian Courier regarding ministry to those of homosexual orientation has both encouraged me and worried me.

I have a sister who has lived in a "monogamous" lesbian relationship for 10 years. She has also left the fellowship of believers, as she perceives no acceptance of her lesbianism among Christians or from God.

Therefore the recent discussion has encouraged me because I sense that the Christian community is now far more loving and caring in its attitudes towards those who are homosexual. I see a strong desire to minister to and with them and to warmly embrace them in the church.

I am discouraged, however, to see a strong movement towards acceptance of homosexual partnerships. I find that the love many of us have for our gay and lesbian family members and friends causes us to want their long-term relationships to be acceptable in God's sight. We see our loved ones in seemingly happy, fulfilled relationships and we find it difficult to believe that God can consider those relationships sinful. We look to Scripture to prove that he doesn't.

When I read articles by pastors with theological know-how, I eagerly hope to be convinced that such relationships are God-approved. However, I'm not convinced. When I approach Scripture from the perspective of "What does God say about this?" rather than "This is what I think God says, and how can I prove it from Scripture," I am led to the conclusion that homosexual sexual relations are sinful in the eyes of the Lord. And I grieve. How can I attest to the love of God to my sister and others when I believe that God calls them to celibacy, to deny themselves the expression of love through a sexual relationship.

Maybe our approach to this issue is too focussed on self-fulfillment via sexual relationships. Maybe we need to re-examine our views of sin and godly living. There are so many things in life that feel right, that feel natural. We find so many things seem harmless, even beneficial; yet God calls us to deny ourselves these things. And it doesn't seem to matter if we're born this way or if we're products of our childhood and/or society. God calls us to a life contrary to the desires of our hearts in many aspects of our lives.

We're never denied intimacy with God

But does God deny us an intimate relationship? No. Regardless of our sexual orientation, we are never denied an intimate relationship with him. That relationship is to be our primary one and should fulfill our spiritual and emotional needs; all other relationships are a gift of his grace. No human relationship can surpass in quality the one we have with our Lord; all others are secondary. We may be denied many wonderful things in our human relationships: children, sexual intimacy, enough emotional support, etc., but with the Lord in our lives and other Christians by our side we can go on, and we can live joyful, fulfilled lives.

As Christians we must drown out the voices of society which define loving, caring relationships as needing sexual intimacy to be fulfilling. God, through the gift of his Son, has provided a model of true loving relationships. With his power we can minister to and support one another in the difficult aspects of our human relationships.

Name withheld

Our foolishness for God's wisdom

Certainly we have reached the consummation of wisdom when tolerance for all things becomes the norm of society. Having an "open mind" about all things indicates that we have reached a stage of self-actualization that far surpasses the ignorance of our ancestors. We are even capable of showing greater tolerance than the omnipotent Creator of the universe. Oh, how "Aware" we have become!

Perhaps we have reached a level of awareness in which the Word of God is no longer relevant, or should not be adhered to. At least, let us rewrite Scripture to make it "politically correct." This way, no one will become offended when we talk of such barbarian notions as judgment and repentance, and our churches will experience an increase never before witnessed. This seems to be the conclusion drawn by some of the leaders of the Christian Reformed Church.

This, of course, is foolish talk, which unfortunately has not been uncommon to this paper in recent times. When the wisdom of Scripture has been replaced by the foolishness of human beings and when we "think it no longer necessary to retain the knowledge of God," he will "give us over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done."

Although it would be nice to pretend that homosexuality is not a sin but a "lifestyle choice," this is clearly not the case, according to Scripture. To choose a life, or to live a life of homosexuality is to choose or live a lifestyle apart from God's will. Only when this biblical truth is realized can anyone truly help an individual who struggles with this sin. Never should the truth of God be exchanged for a lie.

Therefore, let us continue to pray for, love and support those who struggle with this difficult sin, but let us also look to the Word and wisdom of God for answers, not to the foolishness of humankind and the world. Let us also never be ashamed of or compromise the truth, but be confident to profess the true message of the gospel, which includes love and foregiveness, but also justice, judgment and repentance for our confessed sins.

John Moelker
Brighton, Ont.

Fuzzy question deserves fuzzy answer

I wasn't at the examination of Ruth Hofman by Classis Toronto for ordination to the ministry, but a reported question and answer drew my attention. Rev. Herman Van Niejenhuis, pastor of Willowdale Christian Reformed Church, reportedly asked Hofman a question which harkened back to an earlier question and answer. In that earlier question and answer Hofman had been asked whether, when comparing the state of women in creation and the state of homosexuality, homosexuality is a distortion of God's creation. Hofman had answered that it was, whereas the state of women in creation was not a distortion.

Later in the evening, Rev. Van Niejenhuis asked Hofman whether *her* sexuality was distorted. "And I want a one-word answer, yes or no," Van Niejenhuis added. Hofman hesitated and wanted to qualify her response, but she was cut off by Van Niejenhuis, who wanted a yes or a no. Hofman finally answered, "Yes, it is."

I think I understand the point of Van Niejenhuis' question. It was an attempt to level the field between homosexuals and heterosexuals. It was a pastoral attempt to avoid singling out homosexuals as sinners in our midst. But I think the question failed in one important point. It did not allow for a good answer because it was not sharply enough focused.

What did Van Niejenhuis mean with Hofman's sexuality? Did he mean her sexual orientation, which is heterosexual, or did he mean the practice of her heterosexuality?

When it comes to the practice of our sexuality, all of us have to admit that we fail and fall short of the wonderful purpose God has in mind for our sexuality. Homosexuals are not more sinful than are heterosexuals in this area. All of us need to be washed in the blood of Christ. If that is what Van Niejenhuis had in mind with the question, then the question was well answered by Hofman.

But if Van Niejenhuis had meant the question to read, "Is your heterosexual orientation a distortion of God's creation," Hofman's answer should have been: "No, it is not."

We don't want to second-guess Van Niejenhuis' intended meaning. All we want to say here is that, in the light of the earlier discussion about the creation order, it was a confusing question. It was too bad Van Niejenhuis wanted a one-word answer. The question did not deserve one.

BW

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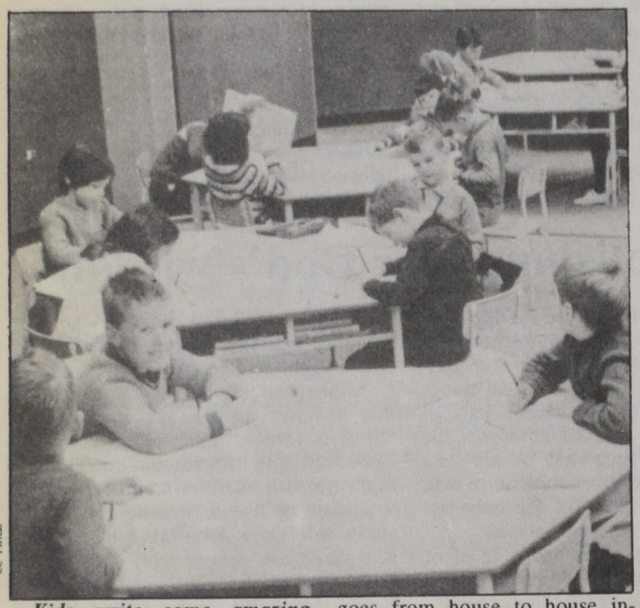
Education

Kids have a certain logic... (Part 1)



CC FILES

Kids write some amazing things at school. Their mistakes often contain a certain pristine logic — and are hilarious because of it. Some elementary school teachers keep track of such gems. A sampling culled from the Internet:

~ The future of "I give" is "I take."

~ A census taker is a man who goes from house to house increasing the population.

~ The parts of speech are lungs and air.

~ The inhabitants of Moscow are called Mosquitoes.

~ Water is composed of two gins. Oxygin and hydrogin. Oxygin is pure gin. Hydrogin is gin and water.

~ A city purifies its water supply by filtering the water then forcing it through an aviator.

~ [Define H2O and CO2:] H2O is hot water and CO2 is cold water.

~ The general direction of the Alps is straight up.

~ Most of the houses in France are made of plaster of Paris.

~ The people who followed the Lord were called the 12 Opossums.

~ The spinal column is a long bunch of bones. The head sits on the top and you sit on the bottom.

~ We do not raise silk in our country because we get our silk from rayon. He is a larger worm and gives more silk.

~ One of the main causes of dust is janitors.

~ A Scout obeys all to whom obedience is due and respects all duly constipated authorities.

~ One by-product of cattle is calves.

~ To prevent head colds, use an agonizer to spray into the nose until it drips into the throat.

~ The climate is hottest next to the Creator.

~ Oliver Cromwell had a large red nose, but under it were deeply religious feelings.

Calvin sends students to the streets to volunteer

Phil de Haan

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Calvin College's StreetFest '96, to be held Sept. 5-6, will involve some 1,000 first-year students who will take to the streets of Grand Rapids for a variety of four-hour volunteer projects.

Before they take a single class Calvin's freshman students will be sweeping sidewalks, feeding the hungry, trimming bushes, entertaining senior citizens and much more, thanks to the fourth annual StreetFest.

StreetFest was initiated because the college believes strongly in the value of volunteering. In fact, Calvin generally refers to volunteering as "service-learning," a term it thinks captures the reciprocal benefits of helping others.

"Service-learning is a way for us to describe what getting out and helping others means," says Rhonda Berg, co-ordinator of Calvin's Service-Learning Center. "It is important to help others — it's a calling that we embrace as a Christian college; but in helping others you also help yourself. We don't see this project as one-way. We feel that students will get as much or more out of it as the people whom they help."

Excellent participation

About 60 Calvin staff, faculty and alumni "mentors" will lead teams of 15 students at about 35 different sites around the city during the two-day project.

The four-hour time slots will include travel time and a brief orientation to the job site, about two hours of volunteer labor and a period of reflection at the end. The project is not compulsory for students, but in the past almost 80 per cent of the first-year students have taken part. Organizers feel numbers will be similar this year.

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Pedagogeries

Alyce Oosterhuis

Shalom *is much more than a chorus for church*

Twelve hundred Christian educators convened in Sydney, Australia, to reclaim the future as our God-given calling to create shalom in the classrooms, schools and international communities. According to Nick Wolterstorff, one of the conference keynote speakers, to create *shalom* is to celebrate diversity, to have our giftedness flourish, to bring justice for all, to remember the richness of our past, to enjoy our relationships. "Our classrooms must be places of delight and prayer and *shalom.*"

Twenty-four hours after leaving Sydney for marathon flights and endless airline transfers, I found myself in Hamilton, Ont., with family and friends. And as we relaxed under an ancient weeping willow tree, my dulled jet-lag senses gave me such a feeling of peace that I thought: "This is a *shalom* of togetherness, acceptance, comfort and delight."

The next day my theologian husband brought out his Hebrew Bible and turned to 2 Samuel 11 where *shalom* is used three times when David asks Uriah: "How is the *shalom* of your commander, your comrades, the battle?" Or as we would say in contemporary English: "How is it going for your commander — are his plans being realized? Are your comrades still filled with purpose? Is the battle contributing to justice for all?"

For King David, who has just seduced Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, the use of "shalom" in the context of his plans for Uriah is a blasphemy of small talk; a contradiction of the restlessness, guilt, injustice and exploitation of power that David uses to rid himself of Uriah. David's actions are the very opposite of the *shalom* that God has intended for his world.

A garden of delights

When we look at a concept's opposite we can sometimes gain insights into its essence. To create *shalom* in our classrooms and communities it is essential that we create a peace with purpose, a justice that is tempered with mercy and forgiveness, a wholeness of experienced love and trust, a power to serve and participate, a garden of delights in which all are given a voice.

Shalom is not just a song to be sung at the conclusion of a church service or a conference as we leave on a spiritual high. *Shalom* is an expression of integrity, honesty, purpose, enjoyment. Where there is *shalom* in a classroom, there is laughter.

In our current technological, information-oriented, competitive, individualistic, materialistic, efficiently globalized, multinationally controlled cultures, the future appears to be infinitely more sad than hopeful, more scorched than delightful. However, for Christian educators throughout such a world, the challenge has been made to reclaim that which was lost, to be the sign posts of hope, to link our fallible and frail selves internationally in one vision.

I once had a principal who believed that "a good classroom is a quiet classroom." He was wrong. Only when a classroom has the *shalom* of laughter, excitement, discovery, purpose, vision, service and affirming love can we describe it as "good."

Alyce Horzelenberg-Oosterhuis is already making plans to attend the next International Christian Educators Conference in 2000 in the Netherlands. In the meantime she will keep teaching educational psychology at The King's University College, Edmonton.

ARTS & MEDIA

Matilda

Matilda a biting satire for adults, an encouraging word for lonely kids

Marian Van Til

Rated Family. Stars Danny De Vito, Rhea Perlman, Embeth Davidtz, Pam Ferris, and Mara Wilson. Based on the story by Roald Dahl. Written by Nicholas Kazan and Robin Swicord. Directed by Danny De Vito.

Children's writer Roald Dahl (b. 1916) has a quirky, unsentimental imagination and an immense empathy for lonely children. Those qualities, plus the sturdy integrity of at least one or two main characters in every story he writes, and the empowerment children receive via his stories, make them far more than superficial tales kids will read once and forget. And the stories draw in adults as well.

It is all of those elements which make Dahl's stories seem so naturally filmable (*James and the Giant Peach, Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory, and The Witches,* are three of the best known Dahl stories to have been filmed).

The setting of this version of *Matilda* has been changed from England to a nameless American suburb to attract North American audiences, but Dahl's unigue story-telling doesn't suffer because of it. The setting change, in fact, allows the screenwriters and director Danny De Vito to offer a scathing satire of the shallow values of suburban America.

'Why would you want to read?'

Matilda is born to parents who are so busy with the superficial trappings of modern suburban life that they barely notice her unwanted arrival, nor her early years. Matilda's dad cheats his way through life by coaxing people into buying worthless used cars; her mom spends every day playing bingo or giving herself new hair-dos or nails; her older brother is a dull brat who loathes her. The "family altar" is the television set (stolen) at which they worship nightly without fail.

There's not a book to be found in this house. When Matilda, at about age four, asks for one, her father looks at her like she's an alien invader — which is essentially the way she is seen by her family. His credo on learning is summed up in his answer to her: "What'dya want a book for? Everything you need to know you can get from television, and a lot faster."

Undaunted, Matilda discovers the public library. And the many worlds that books reveal.

Despite living with the witless wackos who pass as her family, through an act of grace seemingly imparted by all the great

Mara Wilson and Rhea Perlman

literature she reads, Matilda becomes a sweet, principled girl who turns out to be *very* smart.

When she's finally sent to school (a couple of years late because her parents haven't noticed she's old enough to go), she ends up at a private institution run by a huge, sadistic woman who hates children and resembles a Nazi general. (She won the shot-put, hammer throw and javelin events at the Munich Olympics, and still practices — on the kids.)

Fortunately, one of the teachers turns out to be the kids', and especially Matilda's, saving grace. To say more would give too much away for those who haven't read Dahl's story. If some of the subject matter sounds nasty, it is, in the same sense that fairy tale subjects can be "nasty." Dahl doesn't flinch from the problems many kids today encounter, at home and at school. By presenting in exagerated, satirical form the loneliness and lovelessness in many kids' lives, he helps them cope — and also pricks adults to re-examine their values. Kids need not understand what satire is to feel their own plight in this film and to know that others have been where they are. They see in Matilda that they can be strong, courageous, and do the right thing, even if the adults who are supposed to be role models are very poor models.

Exceptional child actor

Mara Wilson as Matilda at about age 8 is exceptional. For a child, Wilson has a keen awareness that subtlety of expression is more effective than blatent mugging, and she gets every nuance right. Wilson makes Matilda's loneliness palpable but never hopeless; Matilda is as surprised as anyone at her own intelligence, but her humility never becomes cloying.

Matilda is child-affirming in a level-headed kind of way, especially so for girls in encouraging them to use their intelligence and to value themselves and learning, which our society still doesn't do very well.

Some parents may be perturbed at how Matilda's parents and the school's headmistress are portrayed. But these self-centred, even disturbed, adults must not be taken as universal symbols; that's clear from both the narration and the film's depiction of the kind teacher whom all the kids love. Uncaring parents and abusive authority figures exist, and for kids who must live with and obey such people, this film offers sympathy and encouragement.

While the filmmakers' realization that real nurturing relationships with adults, "real" family or not, are vital to children's development and happiness, beyond that, in terms of the spiritual world, the film inhabits a closed universe. Which is rather odd, really, for a film that touts the value of new worlds being opened through reading.

Bible translation and technology: good news for the Good News

CALGARY (WBT) — The Word of God is timeless and never-changing, but the technologies used by workers to translate it into every tongue change and improve constantly. LinguaLinks, an innovative and sophisticated computer tool, is now being released to Bible translators and language field workers all over the globe.

"LinguaLinks represents the most significant technological advance for the Bible translation process in this decade," states Steve Sheldon, executive director of Wycliffe Bible Translators International and former linguistic researcher with the Mura Piraha people of Brazil.

Developed by Wycliffe's sister organization, the Summer Institute of Linguistics, LinguaLinks brings together in a seamless system a variety of new electronic helps for the study of the world's unwritten languages. LinguaLinks integrates data management tools, linguistic analysis systems, online references, tutorial and training modules and expert knowledge — all on CD-ROM.

Exchanging 100 lbs for one CD

To do a thorough translation, a linguist may refer to hundreds of books, including lexicons, phonology and phonetics textbooks, commentaries, dictionaries, concordances and text analysis information. Traditionally, these volumes have made a heavy load of 100 or more pounds. However, compact disk (CD) technology makes it possible to store all that information on lightweight disks. One disk can store about 650 megabytes of data; an entire encyclopedia, for example, can fit with room to spare on one compact disk. Reference works critical to the process of Bible translation are now available on the LinguaLinks disk.

But LinguaLinks is more than an electronic library. It is a tool box of hands-on help. To translate a Bible, linguists must record language information, sort it into multiple categories and compare it with other bits of information. Such tedious tasks typically capture weeks and even months of the translator's time. With LinguaLinks many of these functions can be accomplished in mere moments, with the stroke of a key.

This freed time allows translators to get to know people with whom they live, to listen and learn the nuances and subtleties of the language and culture and be better equipped to share the truth of the Scriptures through these relationships.

As a sophisticated knowledge support system, LinguaLinks presents the expert knowledge of generations of experienced translators. When new translators struggle with a particular linguistic problem they will find, literally at their fingertips, the kind of guidance a side-by-side mentor might give.

Displays many languages

As a training tool, LinguaLinks provides modules, small segments of material which the translator can master at his or her own speed. This makes prefield training more effective for new linguists because parts of it can be done on the field and can be put to immediate use.

LinguaLinks Version 1.0 can display the writing systems for many languages at once, including those using non-Roman alphabets such as Hebrew, Greek, Thai, Devanagari (Hindi), Cyrillic and the International Phonetics Alphabet (IPA). With further technological development, future versions of the LinguaLinks system will allow linguists to work with most of the world's scripts — even the more complex ones of Asia.

LinguaLinks also connects several organizations. Pioneer Bible Translators, the United Bible Societies, Missionary Training International and GINESYS Corporation, a South Carolina-based software company, have each provided personnel to play key roles in various aspects of the project.

LinguaLinks technology will have a revolutionary impact on the next 1,000 languages that crucially need a Bible translation. Computer specialists, literacy consultants, linguists and a variety of other workers are required to carry out the task.

To inquire about service with Wycliffe Bible Translators, call (403) 250-5311 or see their World Wide Web site: http://www.wbtc.org

Church

Nepalis snatch up gospel tracts

FORT ERIE, Ont. (Christian Aid) — Instead of throwing rocks or running to the police, Kathmandu dwellers grabbed gospel tracts from marching Christians to read them before believers could hand them out.

This, says Christian Aid Nepal Field Representative Sarla Rawal, is what Christians participating in Nepal's third annual Easter March witnessed in April.

"People were so hungry to know what they were doing that they would snatch the tracts before marchers could hand them out. Buses stopped to let the riders get tracts. So did rickshaws, bicyclists and pedestrians. Seven thousand pieces of literature were distributed in less than two hours."

While thousands of Christians marched through downtown Kathmandu, Rawal accompanied believers from the Evangelical Christian Fellowship in a small peace march around their church site. They had decided to demonstrate in their own area rather than join the large-scale Easter march that had been conducted for the past three years.

Some 200 men and women carried banners, sang Christian praises and handed out tracts. The people were amazingly receptive, asking for tracts from every corner as the crowd passed. Many of the newly reached have since come to Sunday meetings. At the same time, persecution of Christians continues in many areas of this Hindu kingdom.

"The constitution remains the same," Rawal said. "It is still illegal to openly evangelize, or to change your religion."

She said a Christian worker was arrested for openly evangelizing about the end of May, but was released when bail was posted two weeks later.

Worldwide Church of God rejects heretical teachings

LOS ANGELES, Calif. (EP) — The Worldwide Church of God (WCG), founded in 1934 by Herbert W. Armstrong and long regarded as a cult, has publicly recanted teachings that set it apart from orthodox Christianity. Joseph Tkach Jr., president of the group, credits WCG leaders for recognizing contradictions between Armstrong's teachings and Scripture, and for taking action to correct the church's doctrinal errors.

Teachings now abandoned by the church include the belief that Armstrongism was the only church, teachings about the nature of God that suggested a plurality, the belief that man can become equal with God, and the teaching that keeping a Saturday Sabbath was a requirement for salvation.

Tkach says Armstrong was "brilliant, but self-taught," and suggests that his lack of theological education contributed to some of his wrong interpretations.

The change in direction for the church has caused some strife. Membership has dropped from 145,000 in 1988 to about 75,000 now, and dozens of splinter groups have formed. The church television program "The World Today," has been discontinued, and circulation of its *Plain Truth* magazine has dropped from eight million to about one million.

Hank Hanegraaff, president of the cult-watching group Christian Research Institute called the church's turnabout "unprecedented in church history."

Old donations spark new lawsuit

PHILADELPHIA, Pa. (EP) — Some old donations have led to a new lawsuit. In 1762, the people of Philadelphia contributed 6,400 British pounds to the establishment of the Presbyterian Ministers' Fund, to care for the widows and orphans of clergymen. That fund grew into a successful insurance company which recently changed its name to Covenant Life Insurance and in 1994 merged with Provident Mutual Life Insurance Company.

Now the Presbytery of Philadelphia is suing for $30 million, arguing that Provident had no right to acquire the nation's oldest life insurance company, and that the original donors never intended that their gifts be used to benefit a commercial agency. The Presbytery says it would use the $30 million — the present value of the original donations — for the original purpose of caring for destitute clergy, widows and orphans.

Mixed reaction to Filipino Muslim state

MANILA, Philippines (EP) — A committee of Christian leaders in the Philippines has expressed unanimous support for the creation of an autonomous Islamic region in the south. President Fidel Ramos' religious advisory group, the National Ecumenical Consultative Committee, called the plan a key to lasting peace and economic prosperity in a region that has been at war for decades. But church leaders who actually live and work in the proposed region have expressed strong objections to the plan, which would subject the Christian majority in the Mindanao region to Muslim rule.

25 agencies fund Christian TV in Arabic

NICOSIA, Cyprus (EP) — Christians in the Middle East can now watch Christian television programs in the Arabic language on SAT-7, a new satellite television service originating in Cyprus. During its first year the new service will be limited to two hours on Fridays, during a time when the region's Muslim majority are in mosques. The service is expected to expand to round-the-clock programming by the end of the decade, with programming for other language groups, including Farsi, Kurdish and Turkish.

Though most of the population in the region is illiterate, more than 90 per cent own a television, and most are expected to have access to satellite programming by the year 2000. Funding is being provided by 25 Christian agencies. The projected first-year budget for the project is $2.75 million.

A moral dilemma

VATICAN CITY (EP) — The Vatican has suggested that married women in Britain volunteer to bring frozen embryos to term in "prenatal adoptions," rather than permit a British fertilization clinic to destroy thousands of unwanted frozen embryos. The Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* acknowledged that this poses a moral dilemma for the church, which opposes *in vitro* fertilization, but said the alternative is "a prenatal slaughter." British law permits frozen embryos to be stored for only five years; an estimated 6,000 embryos are expected to be destroyed this month.

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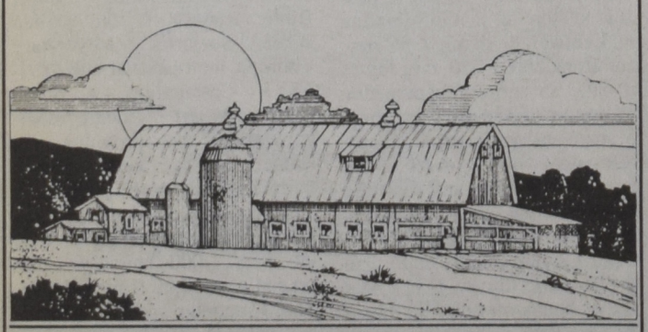

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Church

Chapter & Verse

Wayne Brouwer
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* Al Wolters

The apple of God's eye

"For this is what the LORD Almighty says: 'After he has honored me and has sent me against the nations that have plundered you — for whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye — I will surely raise my hand against them so that their slaves will plunder them.'" (Zech. 1:8-9, NIV).

A comparison with other translations of this text will show that there is considerable disagreement among scholars as to how precisely the underlying Hebrew is to be understood. However, the sentence in the middle, set off by dashes in the NIV, is perfectly clear. Let me highlight two aspects of it.

First, it may seem odd that the text speaks of "his eye" rather than "my eye," since it is the Lord himself who is speaking, and it is the Lord's own eye that is being referred to. The difference is very small in Hebrew (*eyno* as opposed to *eyni*), and could very easily have arisen as a result of scribal error. However, according to Jewish tradition, the original text did have "my eye," but pious scribes deliberately changed it to "his eye" to soften what they considered to be an all-too-human description of God.

New light from the Dead Sea Scrolls

There is now new evidence which supports this Jewish tradition. In one of the Dead Sea Scrolls which has recently been published there is a fragmentary text containing this verse, and the Hebrew there (according to its editor) is *eyni*, "my eye." Since this newly published text is more than a thousand years older than any that were available before, it seems safe to conclude that that was the original reading. In my opinion, the NIV should be revised to reflect this new evidence, especially since the evidence is supported by the ancient Greek and Latin translations.

The second point has to do with the vivid image which the Lord here uses to describe his attitude toward his people. In the context of the whole chapter, the image of God's people as the apple of his eye serves to underscore his renewed love for them after the 70 years of exile in Babylon. According to the terms of his covenant with his people, he had severely punished them for their infidelity, but now he is turning back to them in love.

A Puritan comment

In connection with my own work on Zechariah I recently discovered a fine 17th century commentary on Zechariah by William Pemble, a young Puritan biblical scholar who taught at the University of Oxford. Let me quote what he says in this verse (I have modernized the spelling): *[This demonstrates] God's singular love and care over his people, set forth in a rare similitude of that care which a man hath in preservation of his bodily eyes. What part is more sensible of the least touch, than the eye? Or, being hurt, causeth greater smart and rage? Or, if put out, brings more deformity to the face? God is as tender of his church as we can be of our eyes.*

"For he that toucheth you," i.e., to do you harm and wrong (Ps. 105:15). "Touching the apple of his eye" aimeth not at any inferior part, but strikes God in the face, and seeks to hurt the tenderest piece of the most precious part thereof, his eye, and the apple of his eye [cf. Ps. 17:8 and Deut. 32:10] — pupilla, *the crystal humor or black little ball in the eye, the proper instrument of seeing, strongly guarded by nature in that place.*

Al Wolters teaches Bible and Greek at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont. He is writing a commentary on Zechariah, with an emphasis on the history of interpretation.

Nomadic tribes receive Christ in Kenya

FORT ERIE, Ont. (Christian Aid) — Missionaries serving with Cornerstone Evangelistic Ministry based in Kenya last year started three new fellowships totalling more than 786 members among the nomadic tribal group.

With the *Jesus* film as their chief evangelistic tool, the missionaries carry food and thousands of Bibles as they boldly take the gospel to the malnourished tribals.

"The nomads of Kenya are one of the least evangelized people groups in Africa because of their mobile lifestyles and traditional beliefs and superstitions," said Rae Burnett. She heads Africa Division director for Christian Aid Mission, which provides some financial support for Cornerstone's ministries.

John Kirema, director of the indigenous work, reported that missionaries handed out 3,420 Bibles to many who had never before owned or seen one. Missionaries showed the *Jesus* film, often on a sheet strung between two trees, in 30 villages where more than two million people live. In addition, four major crusades brought more than 15,000 to the feet of the Savior.

"Many of these converts were from the Turkana tribe, where there has been little representation for the Lord until now," Burnett said.

Prayer day for persecuted church

WHEATON, Ill. (EP) — The World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF) is calling the church to an International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church on Sept. 29. Brian O'Connell, director of WEF's Religious Liberty Commission, says a major focus of the day will be increasing the church's awareness of the persecution some of its members face around the globe. The organization is developing support materials in seven languages, and hopes to involve 150,000 churches in 115 countries in the event. Participating organizations include the National Association of Evangelicals, Campus Crusade for Christ, and Prison Fellowship.

Jesus never gave this law

BRASILIA, Brazil (EP) — Married Catholic priests who gathered in Brazil in late July called on the Vatican to end its ban on marriage for clergymen. "The Vatican is hurting us and the future of the Church just to uphold a law that Jesus Christ never gave us," said Anthony Padovano, head of the U.S. Corpus of Married Priests.

About 200 priests were joined by their wives and children for the fourth International Conference of Married Catholic Priests. According to the Movement of Married Catholic Priests, an estimated 100,000 priests have married worldwide. Priests who marry are no longer excommunicated, but lose their right to perform Catholic ceremonies.

Catholic Church confesses sins against Aboriginals

SYDNEY, Australia (EP) — Australia's Roman Catholic Church has apologized for its involvement in an assimilation policy designed to destroy the cultural identity of Aborigines. Under the plan, tens of thousands of children were removed from their parents. "We sincerely regret that some of the church's child welfare services ... assisted governments in implementing assimilationist policies and practices," said the Catholic Bishops of Australia in a statement. "The stolen generation of Australians is indeed the forgotten generation." The statement was the church's first formal apology for participating in the government's forced separation policy, which began in the 1800s and continued into the mid-1960s.

Japanese missionary promotes understanding

MANILA, Philippines (EP) — The Rev. Toshihiro Takami, a Japanese Christian missionary, is the 1996 winner of the Ramon Magsaysay Award for International Understanding. The award honors his work in promoting community leadership. "The board of trustees recognizes his enlisting community leaders from 50 countries in the common cause of secure, sustainable and equitable livelihoods for the world's rural people," the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation said in its citation.

Takami, 70, is the founder of the Asian Rural Institute, near Tokyo, which trains Asians and Africans to work as teachers, pastors, social workers, church workers, and rural extension workers. Takami will receive $50,000, a certificate and a medallion. Ramon Magsaysay, who was president of the Philippines, died in a plane crash in 1957.

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Summer Story

Come ride on my bridge!

Vivian M. Loken

Fortunes fluctuate and customs change. People pass in and out of our lives in a never-ending parade. Only the river I have always known is unchangeable.

Yet the river could not save me from disappointment. I wondered, on that day some years ago, if anything would ever be the same again.

Summertime on a farm such as the one we lived on keeps everyone moving at a fast tempo. Harvesting grain is of prime importance. Urgent jobs crowd the days. It's hard to keep up with work, and idle time is at a premium.

I was expected to help inside and outside as a child. I often had to give up my favorite pastimes during summer months.

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One day, we got a phone call which changed our priorities. My father's older brother, Erick, was coming to town. He was bringing his daughter Ashley with him. Ashley was my age, and I was to entertain her.

"What should I do?" I asked.

"Take her to one of your favorite places. That shouldn't be hard for you!" my mother said with a smile.

Yes, I had several favorite places. One was the bridge over the river running through our acreage.

Expectations of the visit with Ashley flowed through my mind in the same way the river flowed through the pastureland.

When I heard in church about the "streams of living water... within [us[" (John 7:38), I thought I was luckier than most. For I had that stream, and the river besides.

There was little time for thinking about the coming event. Peapods in the garden bulged with their need for attention. Shelves in the basement began to strut their wealth of canned produce.

Suddenly, Ashley arrived. We studied each other. She no doubt saw a gangly girl who had turned shy. I saw a sober, dark-haired girl who seemed glued to her father. Brunette and blonde, we were a contrast. That wasn't our only difference.

"Would you like to go down to the bridge with me?" I asked.

"Is it far?" Ashley inquired. "I don't like to walk very much."

"No, it's just a short ways from here," I said. I calculated distance from the standpoint of one who knows many acres of land.

Moments after we set out, Ashley stopped.

"Won't we be there soon?" she said. "My feet hurt."

For the first time I noticed her patent leather shoes. I was allowed to wear mine only to Sunday School.

"We can walk slower," I suggested, hopefully.

At that moment we both saw a monarch butterfly resting on a roadside flower. By some miracle it stayed there, swaying in the breeze. Ashley was entranced. We watched until it flew away.

It was on the tip of my tongue to say, "Our Sunday School teacher says God touches our hearts the same way the butterfly touches the flower." I suddenly felt bashful and held the words back.

We continued onward. The episode of the butterfly had taken Ashley's attention for a while from her painful feet in their narrow shoes.

At last we walked down the hill within view of the river. If I swaggered a little it was because I thought I had conquered a difficult situation.

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We stood side by side on the bridge.

"What are we here for?" Ashley inquired.

"To see all this," I answered.

Before us was what I thought was the most beautiful scenery in the world. The water flowing below, and far ahead came from a never-ending source.

Where the riverbed is shallow the water sings a gurgly song. Along a stretch of pebbly ground, the river chatters. In the deeper places, it parts around the rocks. There, its tones are lower than the bass voices in the church choir.

Just then, a blue heron emerged from tall grasses near a marshy cove.

"What's that?" Ashley asked in a tone of voice one might use for a hippopotamus or other ungainly creatures.

"A bird," I said, carelessly, suddenly not wanting to share its name or anything else from my coffers of pastoral wealth.

Just then, a hawk circled overhead.

"Oh, oh, he's beautiful!" Ashley cried.

"Hawks kill things like rabbits," I answered, stonily.

"Could it kill that blue bird?" Ashley demanded.

"I suppose so," I said.

"Look over there," I directed, for some reason feeling protective of the blue heron.

"Over there" was the curve in the river. Great trees growing on both sides touched each other forming a green arch. Their reflections spread the water with masses of cool green.

Cumulous clouds lay mirrored on the river's surface.

"Is this all there is to do?" Ashley asked with a whine in her voice.

Breathing deeply, stifling an exasperated sigh, I offered Ashley the bounty of my dream world as one last sacrifice.

"Look down there," I said.

Ashley obeyed.

When I started at the moving current, I found myself floating. I was Aladdin on his magic carpet. In fancy, I reached out to touch the trees on either side. I brushed the wing of a bird in flight.

While I travelled along by the power of my never-failing fantasy, Ashley stirred restlessly.

"I don't see anything down there," she complained.

"Didn't you feel like you were moving?" I asked.

Ashley shook her head. "Can we go now?" she asked.

All the pleasure of sharing my best-loved place with another person fell around me. Its bits dropped at my feet like shards from a broken vase.

Although she seemed careless and unknowing, Ashley sensed my disappointment.

"Look!" she said, pointing out a bird feather lying in the road. Later she asked about the Solomon Seal blossoming bravely at the road's edge. She was impressed that I knew what it was.

"Did you have a good time?" Ashley's father asked when we got back home.

"Oh, yes," she said. "We saw a hawk. It swooped down and picked up this blue bird with the long neck and carried it away!"

"Goodness!" her father said.

Mother saw my startled expression. Quickly avoiding an embarrassing rebuttal of the story, she steered us to the table for afternoon lunch.

***

We all walked to the car when Ashley and her father left, waving and watching as they drove away.

Mother asked later, "Do you want to talk about your time with Ashley?"

Scalding tears came then, and my story tumbled out.

"She didn't like any of it, and she lied!" I said emphatically. "The hawk didn't get the blue heron."

The sobs had spent themselves before Mother suggested quietly, "The bridge doesn't *really* carry you down river either, does it?"

"But that's not a lie. When I stand there and watch the current, it's just like the bridge is moving," I protested.

"Ashley no doubt saw that the hawk *could* pick up the blue heron," my mother said.

During the bustling activity of summer days of the farm, I was surprised one day to find a note from Ashley in the mail.

"Thank you," she said, "for showing me your favorite place."

Her note went on, "I think it would be fun to write letters regularly. My teacher says it's a good way to improve English and grammar. Would you like to do that?"

Neither of my parents commented.

One day, when I said I'd seen a monarch butterfly, my mother said, "Maybe Ashley would like to hear about it. It might be even the same one you saw when she was here."

Thus began a correspondence that has lasted for more than 25 years. I found Ashley to be warm and caring. She was as faithful a correspondent as I could have found.

After the disappointing episode during Ashley's visit, my mother said, "Trust God in matters like this. He knows the difference between dreams and reality. He wants you to have dreams.

"But he also wants you to understand that people don't always share your dreams. He wants you to allow other people their way of seeing things, too."

Vivian Loken is a freelance writer who lives in Minneapolis, Minn.

Feature

The melt-water of personal meaning

Trouble in the Church: Part III

Rev. Bernard H. De Jonge

I begin Part III by telling you what happened to the town of St. Jean Vianney, in the Saguenay River region of northeastern Quebec. In April of 1972, a huge land movement underneath the town swallowed up houses and businesses; it killed 31 men, women and children. That week, citizens of the town had heard strange noises like the earth settling and what they thought was running water underground. They thought nothing of it, though, because it was spring break up on the Saguenay River.

Scientists later discovered that half the town was built on a mixture of fine sand, silt and clay; the other half was on the bedrock of the Canadian Shield.

Two kinds of land forms

As the spring melt-water mixed with the clay, silt and sand, the soil became like quicksand and pulled away from the bedrock. It started flowing like ooze at a rate of 25 kph to the Saguenay River, about three kilometres away. This created a canyon about one kilometre wide and two kilometres long — the land separated creating two land forms.

I describe this geological event since it is an apt metaphor for two major "land forms" that undergird the church's foundation. The church of Jesus Christ rests on the bedrock of the Word — the truth expressed in the Scriptures, the creeds and in the confessions and catechism (things external or outside of ourselves). The second "land form" on which the church is built is the soil of the Spirit. That is, the fine mixture of emotion, feeling and experience; something that is internal.

To use a different description: one would be tradition, and the other, creative change. The life and vitality of the church rest on these two different and distinct land forms. The church draws strength and life from both: a truth that comes from shared word as found in Scriptures, in creeds, and confessions; a truth that comes from the prompting of the Holy Spirit working within; that is, in the feelings, intuition and experiences.

These two "land forms" must lay side by side; they each feed the other and build the church. They have to strengthen each other. A church that will not build on the prompting of the Holy Spirit will become a church tied to tradition, and sometimes to legalism. It will lose personal relevance in a changing world. It becomes something that looks and sounds like a museum.

"Truths such as covenant, Kingdom, atonement, baptism, incarnation, providence, predestination, infallibility and many others are poorly understood. What do these phrases mean? One person has one idea, and another has a different idea."

Likewise, a church that will not accept the strength and firmness of creed, confession and Scripture — in a shared, external context — runs the risk of becoming a church such as Paul describes in Eph. 4:14: "Tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind and teaching...."

So they need each other. Tradition and change, experience and creed, catechism and charisma, complement each other.

Go with your feelings

As the church moves toward the year 2000 there are strong tremors in those foundations. I liken this to the "melt-water" of modern-age individualism, in which each person has the freedom to speak his or her mind. In the secular arena, there is no censorship of ideas, no censorship of thought or presentation of values. There seems to be only the melt-water of what I label as "sensory appreciation" — you're encouraged to follow your feelings; your feelings hold sway. "Go with your feelings, because that's where you are at and feelings are never wrong."

The melt-water of the modern age is always curious about new things, intensely interested in new technology, in advances in science, in new inventions. Ours is a society quickly bored with stuff that's "old" or familiar. This modern secular society is one that cuts itself off from its roots and history. It no longer appreciates history as a "bedrock" subject to be taught in universities and in schools.

An 18th century diorama.

This melt-water has infiltrated the foundation of the church. It has liquefied the fine mix of spirit, emotion and experience, making the foundation shaky. As that foundation "liquefies," the church begins to slide away from the firmer ground of creed, confession, doctrine and catechism. Slowly on, those two land forms that should have stayed fused together come apart; a canyon begins to form. It becomes so dramatic that the two sides stare at each other from across a huge divide.

Having sketched this tectonic, geological activity in the church's geology some of you may be asking, "Where is the evidence of this? What are you looking at when you see this taking place?"

Lack of agreement

I have two considerations, culled over years of ministry in the Christian Reformed Church and from conversations with leaders and colleagues in different denominations.

One piece of evidence is the difficulty Christians have in discussing matters of faith and in studying the Bible together. Even in the same church it's often hard to come to a common understanding of what the text is saying. This is because there is frequently little or no understanding of the basic building-blocks of our faith and theology, the awareness of our basic teachings that come from Scripture.

Truths such as covenant, Kingdom, atonement, baptism, incarnation, providence, predestination, infallibility and many others are poorly understood. What do these phrases mean? One person has one idea, and another has a different idea. And many people understand these terms only haphazardly. Therefore, it becomes difficult, it not impossible, to come to an agreement when believers get

Continued on page 12...

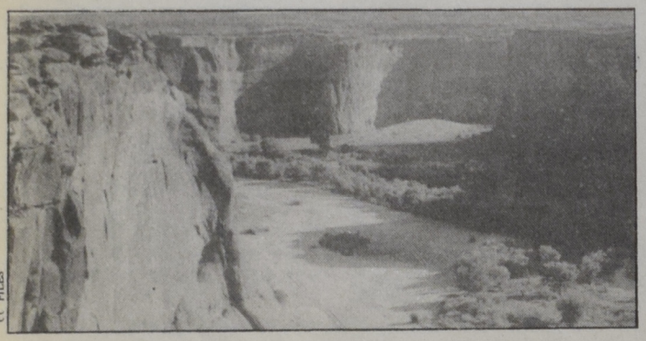
Feature

The melt-water of personal meaning

... *continued from page 11*

together for Bible study.

Instead of searching the Scriptures to find out what the text is saying, the limit of Bible study is "sharing" — "this is what the passage means to *me*." The point of Bible studies no longer focuses on what is *true* about this text, but it becomes "what it means to me." Then, as I hear you share, I have to work through in my mind "Can *I* live with how *you* feel about this text?"



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Melt-water has infiltrated the foundation of the church. It has liquefied the fine mix of spirit, emotion and experience, making the foundation shaky. Slowly on, those two land forms that should have stayed fused together come apart; a canyon begins to form.

Resting on personal experience

In the context of believers studying together, such feelings are difficult to challenge. If someone says, "This is what the text means to me," it becomes very difficult to challenge because politeness and courtesy dictate that you not offend or disagree aloud.

In such a setting, the ground on which Bible study rests is personal experience, and intuition — "This is what the Lord is saying to me." The ground of commonly held and understood theology is not used because the terms are no longer understood — or poorly understood. There is also an impatience with learning these theological ideas.

In catechism classes the teacher or minister often hears, "Why do we have to know all this stuff? What good is it going to do?" No matter how you try to answer how valuable it is to know some of these concepts — such as covenant, Kingdom, infallibility, predestination and providence — the conviction of many boils down to this: "Well, it doesn't really matter what you believe, as long as you believe."

It is difficult to teach these biblical concepts because of the melt-water of the modern age.

Islands of experience

I had confirmation of this "experiential theology" recently in discussions with colleagues of other Christian denominations. We described what our work is as pastors. Some saw themselves as agents of spiritual renewal, helping people know God only as *they* experienced or understood him (or her): it struck me that it must be tremendously difficult to have any meaningful faith dialogue in those churches. How can you discuss your experience, how can you share and relate to how another person feels? So we become islands of experience, drifting away from the bedrock of commonly convincing ideas.

In looking at the broader picture of Christian Reformed Church debates, maybe it is this difficulty that stymies meaningful discussion and prevents achieving change. We talk past each other, shouting over the divide. We are standing with both feet on one side, rather than with one foot on the matter of the Spirit, and one on the matter of the Word, the two necessary foundations.

Martin Luther's frustration

That is one signal — an over-emphasis on Word alone, or an over-emphasis on the Spirit. A second signal is found in the understanding and appreciation of liturgy and worship in the church. It is somewhat curious how modern worship has taken on the frustration that Martin Luther had with the Roman Catholic mass. It seems that history is repeating itself.

In earlier centuries, around the time of the Reformation, the Protestants disapproved of the Roman Catholic celebration of the mass. The Roman Catholic teaching at that time was that God's sovereign, forgiving grace was received in the sacrament. Worshippers came to receive grace and the power of God to work his grace was in the Eucharist itself. What was in the worshipper was not significant; they came to be fed; they came to receive grace. Therefore, some forms of the mass — especially the Tridentine Latin Mass — became very ritualized, ornate and formal to better convey this sovereign grace being given to the worshipper.

It was the service, the mass that fed you, that nursed you. By contrast, the Protestants of that era said, No, the service is what you bring, and it is what you share with the others who are there. In worship you give, you do not receive. So there was an emphasis on God's people bringing their gifts, their prayers, songs, needs, and bringing whatever else was necessary to give God praise.

Coming to get something

Ironically, modern liturgical worship has fallen victim to this earlier difficulty that the Protestants had with the Roman Catholic mass. Now it's the worship service that nurses and feeds the worshipper. Worship services and liturgies are judged and orchestrated to "move" or "touch" the worshippers so that they *feel* the presence of the Lord; so that there is some visceral, physical emotion being stirred.

In the attempt to achieve this end, there is an unseemly haste and willingness to borrow liturgical ideas and expressions which may or may not be appropriate to Reformed worship. It's what could be called "liturgical utilitarianism" — the end justifies the means. That is to say, churches judge the rightness or wrongness of elements integrated into worship on the result it creates within the worshipper. Churches then experiment and utilize anything and everything that is seemingly permissible. Thus, worship becomes judged on its power to subjectively "move" those present so that they receive a grace. They come to *get* something, and they often leave permanently because they say, "We are not getting anything out of this."

Here is where I beg to differ with this philosophical idea, where I plead for the old conviction that worship is something shared by all, as members each bring something. Worship is not a banquet put on by "restaurant" professionals at which the hungry come and get something to eat. Rather, worship is a family "pot-luck" to which each one brings something for the others to share.

It is the responsibility of God's people and of the church leadership to recognize the influence of the individualism of our time. It is the responsibility of the church leadership and every believer to keep one foot on each "land form" to shield the Spirit land formation from being liquefied by the melt-water of the modern age. One foot on the solid rock of the Scriptures and the security of the Word, and the other foot on the awareness that God moves with his Spirit inside hearts and lives. The two belong together. The Lord leads us by his Word *and* Spirit. These two land forms need not divide, and any and all change must filter through both.

"Churches judge the rightness or wrongness of elements integrated into worship on the result it creates within the worshipper. Churches then experiment and utilize anything and everything that is seemingly permissible."

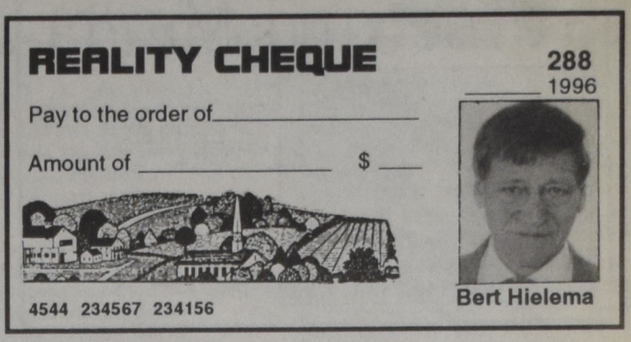
...To be continued.

Bernard De Jonge is pastor of the Ancaster Chr. Ref. Church, Ancaster, Ont.

ALAN DOERKSEN

"Worship is not a banquet put on by 'restaurant' professionals at which the hungry come and get something to eat. Rather, worship is a family 'pot-luck' to which each one brings something for the others to share."

Is 'stewardship' really a good word?



Bert Hielema

About 20 years ago Harry Houtman approached me to sign papers which would incorporate Christian Stewardship Services (CSS). Subsequently I was present on behalf of Citizens for Public Justice at CSS's inaugural meeting in Sarnia, Ont. At that time I felt that the general concept of stewardship was quite plain, applying to both natural resources and personal affairs. The book *Earthkeeping, Christian Stewardship of Natural Resources*, in a special chapter on stewardship defines that concept as relating to creation. As "such service [of nature and humanity] is the will of God who charged us with dominion; its purpose is to preserve, enhance and glorify the creation and in so doing, to glorify the Creator."

How does the Bible use 'steward'?

You may know that the Greek word for stewardship is *oikonomia*, of which the root words are *oikos* (= house) and *nomos* (= law). Our word economy is derived from it, which thus, in its original meaning, can be translated as "the laws [governing] our habitat or household." Bob Goudzwaard in his book *Capitalism and Progress* says, "Stewardship (*oikonomia*) designates the behavior of the steward, whose task it is to manage the estate entrusted to him [or her, I might add] in such a way that it will continue to bear fruit and thus provide a living for everyone who lives or works on it."

Now, after some 20 years, I have difficulty with the word stewardship when it is used to mean being a manager of creation on behalf of God. I have no quarrel with the word in the personal sense. It is beautiful and rich, expressing a great ideal: to live responsibly before God and manage our own affairs prudently. I don't dispute that I have to give account to God for whatever I do, and that this accountability is unique to me as a member of the human race.

What is then my specific objection to the word? First, when the Bible uses the word steward it usually refers to a particular position within a ruler's household. Joseph was a steward, second to only Pharaoh himself: Jesus had a friend whose husband was a steward for Herod; and in his parables Jesus used "steward" only in the context of estate managers.

Although the word appears in 1 Cor. 4 and 1 Peter 4 as "stewards of God's mysteries and grace," the Bible never uses it to mean steward of God's creation. So strictly speaking, that is a meaning invented by humans. To give the word a biblical basis, the *Earthkeeping* book cites as proof only Psalm 8, which contains the well-known lines: *You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet* (NIV). (The King James Version says, "You gave him dominion over the works of your hands....").

Although I know some Greek, Hebrew is a foreign tongue to me, so I must rely on translations. But I am a bit suspicious of most translations, which I think suffer from preconceived ideas of nature and grace and often miss the holistic approach to matters. In *The Poet's Bible*, which tries to rediscover the voice of the original text, David Rosenberg, a Hebrew scholar, translates that section of Psalm 8 as follows: *Yet you let him rise above himself, toward you, held by music of words.*
You set his mind in power to follow the work of your hand, laying the world at his feet.

I like that translation. It does away with that misunderstood "dominion" and says that humans can imagine what God had in mind when he created, and may enjoy the whole wide world.

Implied dualism

Also the word "stewardship" in connection with creation denotes to me a dualistic relationship, as if humans are separated from the rest of creation and not totally interdependent with all matter. We couldn't live three minutes without air or three days without water.

Being a steward of creation somehow suggests to me that I am the well-meaning manager of the natural world for God, who, as the absentee Landlord, is out there somewhere, while I, here on earth, am charged with doing God's dirty work, so to speak. God is the big boss; I am the dutifully order-taker. Stewardship thus reinforces the image of God as distant from creation, only indirectly in touch with it, thus ignoring the Covenant promise.

Covenant. An old-fashioned word that is not very popular anymore, yet it lies at the heart of the gospel. Let me give one example of covenant. We all know about David and Jonathan 1. Samuel 18:3-4 gives us a hint.

Stewardship reinforces the image of God as distant from creation, only indirectly in touch with it, thus ignoring the Covenant promise.

These friends make a covenant, and to seal that commitment exchange clothes and weapons, symbolically expressing that whatever they possess they now own in common. The custom went even further and involved making a small bodily incision, letting the blood mingle and rubbing dirt in the wounds so that a scar would remain visible as sign of their eternal allegiance.

That's exactly what God did with us. Genesis 9 relates that whatever God owns he has given to us. Our obligation is that we are to give God whatever we have. God sealed this covenant in the blood of Christ, whose scars remain as visible signs of the covenant. God loved his cosmos so much, and us as well, that he made this deal with us. Amazing Grace. As the Head of the New Covenant, Jesus affirmed that we are not stewards of creation but heirs, thus owners of God's handiwork.

Heirs, not stewards

So, since the founding days of the Christian Stewardship Services my ideas of stewardship have changed. We are not stewards of the house of God — no longer slaves, says Galatians 4:7, but sons and daughters and heirs; and thus owners and co-owners of the creation.

And what has all this to do with the economy?

Well, it is telling that in our times the meaning of the word "economics" has little or nothing to do with the original intent of the word, that is to "regard the laws of the habitat," and has increasingly and now almost exclusively come to mean "the pursuit of self-enrichment, for ever greater monetary possessions, if need be, at the expense of others."

We are the rightful, covenantal owners of the universe, and not just managers or stewards. As co-owners of God's habitat we have to follow the house rules. That is what "economy" means, and that is what we as Christians ought to pursue. These rules are governed by two conditions: love and justice. We now see how the wrong interpretation of these rules, aided, I think, by the linear idea of stewardship — God to us to creation — has given us a society in which greed is the main motivator and in which our natural resources are abused, giving us global warming, ozone depletion and the spread of dangerous diseases. To follow the house rules means that love and justice must be applied not only to us human beings but also to every grassblade and animal in the creation of which we are co-owners. We are part of everything and everything is part of us, and together we make up the great mosaic of God's splendor.

Spoiled Westerners

Our struggle to reflect that splendor is made more difficult because we as spoiled Westerners have been lulled to believe that our state of material ease is a natural consequence of God's blessings. The present state of devolution, of thing falling apart everywhere, proves differently. Perhaps I should call this process DEVILution, because the Prince of this world, the Great Adversary, has led us astray from the beginning and is now more powerful than ever.

We have to start thinking about re-defining the meaning of sin to include such ordinary things as driving a car and switching on a light. Yet contemporary technological development also gives us a foretaste of the joys of eternity. So take it from there.

The Hielemas have five children of whom three now live in the U.S.: California, North Carolina and Iowa. They live their retired life in Tweed, Ont., most of the time.

Peter and Marja are IN

Teen asks 'what's wrong with being gay?'

Dear P & M:

I'm 16 years old and I've been wondering about this for a while. So I guess I better just ask you: Why is it wrong to be gay?

Dear Young Friend:

We'll present approaches taken by people on either side of this issue. There are various Bible passages that condemn homosexuality. In Leviticus, homosexual acts are called "detestable" and listed with such unlawful sexual practices as adultery, incest and bestiality. In Romans 1, Paul uses such phrases as "shameful lusts," "indecent acts" and "unnatural relations" in his reference to homosexual sex. In 1 Corinthians 6, homosexuality joins the list of "wicked practices" that can prevent entry into the Kingdom of God.

Some Christians point to the creation order. The sexual norm throughout Scripture involves male and female, created for each other with parts that fit together in such a way that reproduction, as well as mutual pleasure, is possible. Homosexual unions are not based on such created compatibility and cannot fulfill God's creation mandate to "be fruitful and increase in number."

Finally, one can point to the pain experienced by lesbians and gays. It is not a life that most would willingly choose. Our more accepting society's attitude notwithstanding, most gays would point to their painful personal struggle as proof that they did not intentionally choose their sexual orientation. Such orientation has been a reason for much suffering.

Those who argue the other side of the issue point out that homosexuality is not a choice involving sinful volition. It's just the way one is, just as one is white or black, short or tall. So coming out of the closet is a courageous acknowledgement of who one is, as well as a challenge for others to accept this God-given identity.

On this side, the argument rages whether homosexuality has genetic or experiential roots. Is there a gene that predisposes some to the gay life? Or does the answer lie with early, formative personal relationships or sexual experiences?

Right now the Christian Reformed Church holds the position that homosexual orientation is something beyond our control. Homosexual activity, on the other hand, can be controlled and should be avoided for the reasons given above. Pastorally, this position urges acceptance of gays and lesbians into Christian fellowship while simultaneously insisting on abstinence from gay sex.

Our view is this:

We think that homosexuals are no more hellbound than heterosexual sinners. Sexual immorality is a problem for many of us. And all of us, whatever our orientation, need to be "washed, sanctified and justified" in the name of Christ (1 Cor. 6:11).

We think that monogamy and fidelity is God's will for homosexuals and heterosexuals alike. While it is true that gay culture seems to be synonymous with anonymous sex, it must also be admitted that our generation (and many of us) have drunk just as deeply from the rivers of the sexual revolution. God's pointed finger and beckoning hand is meant for all of us.

If you as a teenager have had what you think may be homosexual fantasies or feelings, don't panic. Such feelings are often a normal part of sorting out your sexuality as you physically and psychologically move toward adulthood. So if your question comes out of the fear that you may be gay, please don't jump to any conclusion.

We wonder to what extent abuse figures in this whole discussion. If a poor relationship with a father, an incestuous relationship with a brother or an abusive relationship with a man drives a female into the maternal arms of another female, what should we judge? The consequence? The cause? Or both? If years of being called a wimp or faggot drives a young man into a life in which his sensitivity is accepted, whom should we comfort? The community that did the labeling or the one who ultimately saw no choice but to be who everyone else saw him to be?

Finally, while we are truly tempted to take the view that homosexual unions are fine as long as the partners are faithful, we can't. We cannot escape some very clear scriptural condemnation of homosexual activity. The creation order does make heterosexuality the norm and the means by which human life is continued. And the pain of homosexuality seems to be the suffering that comes when the natural is exchanged for the unnatural. But we will not condemn, even though we cannot condone. We believe that we must totally accept our gay and lesbian Christian brothers and friends with the understanding that all of us struggle with our sexuality.

Is it wrong to be gay? No. Wrong only enters in when we act immorally and unbiblically. On that score homosexuals and heterosexuals have both committed more wrongs than can ever be righted. Which is why we are so thankful for the love of Christ which covers a multitude of sins.

Write to: P & M, 16 Kimbermount Drive, St. Catharines, ON L2N 5V6.

Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of Herman de Jong, Bill Lidkea, Alan Vandermaas, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.

Percentage of Christians among world population stagnates as Islam grows

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. (EP) — Despite massive missionary and evangelism efforts, the percentage of the world's population which practices the Christian faith has remained the same for 25 years, while the number of Muslims has grown dramatically, according to religion statistician David B. Barrett.

According to Barrett's figures, Christianity is still the world's largest religion, with 33.7 per cent of the world's population, the same as in 1970. Today, 1.95 of earth's 5.8 billion people adhere to Christianity.

High Muslim birth rate

Since 1970, Muslims doubled their numbers, increasing to 1.13 billion people from 564 million. The main cause of this dramatic growth, says Barrett, is the higher birth rate among the Muslim population. The Muslim percentage of the world population rose to 19.4. Barrett calculates that both Christianity and Islam will show slight growth by the year 2000.

The third largest group is comprised of the "non-religious," totalling 876 million people, or 15.1 per cent of the world's population. Barrett predicts that by 2000 this group will fall below the 15 per cent mark, as in 1970.

The 793 million Hindus comprise 12.6 per cent of the earth's population; by 2000, their numbers are expected to increase by one per cent. The percentage of Buddhists (5.6%) will most likely decrease slightly from the present 326 million.

Fewer atheists now

Atheists, numbering 222 million, have been retreating steadily since 1970, dropping from 4.6 per cent of the world's population to 3.8 per cent. This trend is expected to continue.

The new religious movements have stagnated at 123 million people (2.1%). Tribal religions have about 100 million adherents; their percentage of the world's population is decreasing and lies currently at 1.7 per cent.

The 19 million Sikhs represent 0.32 per cent of the world's population, while 13.8 million Jews add up to 0.23 per cent. The number of adherents to Judaism has also remained relatively unchanged since 1970.

Within Christianity, the Charismatic and Pentecostal movements have grown the most in the past 25 years. Nearly one in four Christians belongs to these groups. Charismatic and Pentecostal churches have grown more than six-fold since 1970, to nearly 480 million people. Continued growth is expected.

Half of Christians are Catholic

The Roman Catholic Church remains the largest Christian denomination, totalling 980 million members — meaning that half of all Christians belong to the Catholic Church. However, the number of Catholics has decreased by about five per cent since 1970, a trend Barrett expects will continue.

CC FILES

Pope John Paul II: The Roman Catholic Church remains the largest Christian denomination.

Though the proportion of Christians hasn't changed, the global distribution of believers has. The Christian population is gaining momentum in Africa and Asia. Still, Europe remains in the lead with 27 per cent of the total. Latin America holds second place, with 443.6 million Christians (22.7%). Africa is next, with 300 million Christians (15.3 %); Asia has 291.6 million (14.9%). North America is fifth, with 201.4 million Christians (10.3 %).

Barrett says the non-evangelized population worldwide has decreased from 1.4 billion (37.6%) to 1.12 billion people (19.3%). By 2000, he expects this percentage to fall to 16.6 per cent — despite the proliferation of plans designed to bring the number down to zero by the millennium's end. Then, of course, there's the question of how serious many adherents are about their faith, an issue not covered by Barrett's statistics.

Classifieds

Classified Rates

(Revised February 1, 1995)
Births $25.00
Marriages & Engagements $40.00
Anniversaries $45.00
2-column anniversaries . $90.00
Obituaries $45.00
Notes of thanks $35.00
Birthdays $40.00
All other one-column classified advertisements: $15.00 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is $15.00. Letter under file number $35.00 extra. Photos: $25.00 additional charge.
Note: All rates shown above are GST inclusive
ATTENTION!
a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.,
b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is *not* acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.
c) Photographs sent by fax *are not* acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.
d) *Christian Courier* will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.
e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to five column inches. *Christian Courier* reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of $15.00 per column inch (GST incl.).
NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS
We offer a one-year subscription for only $25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the *Christian Courier* and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose $25.00 and the couple's correct address.
Christian Courier
4-261 Martindale Rd.
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
Phone: (905) 682-8311
Fax: (905) 682-8313

Thank You

WALRAVEN:
A heartfelt thank you to all who remembered us with prayers, calls and sent us best wishes for our 65th wedding anniversary. We especially would like to thank our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren for all their love and support. The Lord has truly blessed us.
Adriaan and Cathelina Walraven, Collingwood, Ont.

Births

HEIDA/PEETOOM:
John and Jenny thank God for the safe arrival of a healthy son
ISAAC JOHN
born June 15, 1996, at 7:07 p.m., weighing 9 lbs.10 oz.
Isaac is the second grandchild of Peter and Evelyn Heida of St. Catharines, Ont., and the 10th grandchild of Adrian and Johanna Peetoom of Waterloo, Ont.
Address: 533 Kerr Street, Oakville, ON L6K 3C9

KUIPERY:
With deep gratitude to God, the Creator of all life, we joyfully announce the birth of our first child, a daughter,
RACHEL IRENE
born on August 8, 1996.
Proud parents are Rob & Renata Kuipery (nee Steenbeek).
Rachel is the eighteenth grandchild of Henry & Gerda Kuipery of Acton, Ont., and the first grandchild of Arend & Olga Steenbeek of Kitchener, Ont.
Address: 83 Bailey Ave., Guelph, ON N1H 1H1

Anniversaries

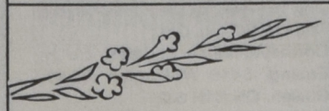
"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal.6:2).
With gratitude and joy to the Lord, we celebrate with our parents
JOE and SIENI BOONSTRA
(nee BAKKER)
their 45th wedding anniversary on Sept. 3, 1996. Praise God for his faithfulness! Congratulations and love from all of us.
Charlie & Diane Boonstra
Amanda, Joshua, Daniel
Sylvia Barnard
Tim
Hank & Deb Boonstra
Michael, Matthew, Melissa
Sid & Annette Boonstra
Tabitha, Warren, Samantha
Am & Karin Boonstra
Meghan
Jeff & Chris Hogeterp
Selina, Bradley, Nicholas

Thank You

DE KONING:
The Lord gave us 45 years together. We thank our children, grandchildren, church family, friends, acquaintances for the many visits, phone calls, letters, cards, flowers, gifts, e-mail and faxes we received. Above all, we thank God for His goodness over us.
Jan and Jane de Koning

Anniversaries

St.Catharines Alliston
1961 September 4 1996
With thanksgiving for all of God's blessings on their union, we wish to announce the 35th wedding anniversary of our parents
DIRK and LINIE BROER
"Love, all alike, no season knows nor clime, Nor hours, days, months, which are the rags of time."
(**John Donne,** "The Sun Rising")
Congratulations and much love from your children and grandchildren:
Kathleen & Paul
Saskia, Lukas
John & Tricia
Brenda & Scott
Wilma
Home address: 496 Albert St. East, Box 1-7, Alliston, ON L9R 1J9



30th Anniversary
1966 August 12 1996
With praise and thanksgiving to God, we celebrate with mom and dad
BEN and WILMA BRONSEMA
(nee VERBURG)
their 30th wedding anniversary. Thank you mom and dad for the love you always show to all of us and especially to each other. May the Lord bless you with many more wonderful years together.
With much love from you children and grandchildren:
Kim & Randy Smit
Ryan, Matthew, Cole
Pete & Eraina Bronsema
Diana
Jamie Bronsema
Bill Bronsema (and Michelle)
Home address: 18 Muskoka Dr., Guelph, ON N1E 3M7

Brockville Listowel
1956 September 7 1996
With joy and thanksgiving to God we wish to announce the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents
LIEUWE and RIEMIE GREYDANUS
(nee HIEMSTRA)
Jack & Darlene Greydanus — Atwood, Ont.
Roy & Jane Rozendal — Listowel, Ont.
Gerry & Ev den Toom — Atwood, Ont.
Jim & Emily Greydanus — Listowel, Ont.
Mark & Diane Turk — Ridgetown, Ont.
and 15 grandchildren.
All relatives and friends are invited to help celebrate at an open house at their home at R.R.#4, Listowel, ON, N4W 3G9, from 2 - 4:30 p.m.
Best wishes only.

Anniversaries

1956 August 31 1996
It is with great joy and thanksgiving to God that we are pleased to announce the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents
WILLIAM and COBY HEYNS
(nee ZEVENBERGEN)
May God bless you and keep you in His care.
Congratulations and love from your children and grandchildren:
Shirley & Philip Visser
Nathan, Michael, Juliana, Rebecca
Fred & Helen Heyns
Bradley
Robert & Brenda Heyns
Courtney, Rachael, Emily
Linda & Bruce DeBoer
Lisa
Glenda & Calvin Kapteyn
Amanda, Christina
Brenda & Wayne Hummel
You are invited to share in their celebration at an open house, August 31, 1996, from 2 - 5 p.m. at the First Chr.Ref.Church, 201 4th Ave. West, Owen Sound, Ont.
Best wishes only.
Home address: R.R.#5, Owen Sound, ON N4K 5N7

Hamilton September 8 Beamsville
1951 1996
"Take delight in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, trust in Him, and He will act."
(Psalm 37:4,5)
With thankfulness and joy we announce the 45th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents
ARIE and CARLA KOORNNEEF
(nee VAN WELY)
We rejoice that they have been blessed with many years of health and happiness together.
Congratulations Mom and Dad!
Alice & Don Klamer
Scott, Clinton, Lance, Lee
Adrian & Kathy Koornneef
Bryan, Bradley, Dylan
Henry & Joanne Koornneef
Diana, Karen, Michael
Fred & Evelyn Koornneef
Marcus, Zachary, Jessica
Caroline & Ron Eyk
Heather, Mark
Home address: 4292 Lincoln Ave.S., Beamsville, ON L0R 1B2

Personal

ONE TO ANOTHER
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#302, 1502-2nd Ave. S.
Lethbridge, AB T1J 4A2

Anniversaries

1956 September 3 1996
We hope to celebrate the joyful occasion of the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents
KLAAS and JANNEKE (JEAN) TEN HAVE
(nee DEN HAAN)
Dad and Mom, Opa and Grandma, we thank God for his faithfulness to you in the past, and trust that He may give you many more years together, in health and happiness.
With love from all your children and grandchildren:
Annette & Jerry Van Ee — Surrey, B.C.
Sarah, Dave, Mark, Kimberly
Amy & Fred Breukelman — Thunder Bay, Ont.
Melanie, Allison, Brenda, Carolyn, Katrina, Eric, Benjamin
Rolfe Ten Have — Thunder Bay, Ont.
Michael, Robbie
Nancy & Mark Boesche — Thunder Bay, Ont.
Katie, Ricky
Ken & Elaine Ten Have — Thunder Bay, Ont.
Kurtis
Home address: R.R.#5, Thunder Bay, ON P7C 5M9

Leeuwarden Mississauga
1946 1996
SIETSE (JOHN) and JO VANDER BOOM
(nee KOOISTRA)
On September 4th, 1996, our parents and grandparents will have been married for 50 years. God has blessed them richly and kept them in his care, for which we, and they, are very thankful. As their children, we are grateful for the love that Mom and Dad have always given to us; we especially thank them for teaching us to love the Lord above all else.
We had a happy celebration with family and friends on August 16th. We pray for the Lord's continued blessings.
Theo & Renee Vander Boom — Atlanta, Georgia
Teresa, Mark, David, Karen
Chris & Jim Vanderkooy — Ancaster, Ont.
Sheldon, Michelle, Trisha, Sarah
Margaret & Jack Vanderkooy — Simcoe, Ont.
Steven, Timothy, Rachel, Leisha
Home address: 1271 Walden Circle, #P202, Mississauga, ON L5J 4R4

For Rent

For rent: Two-bedroom bungalow, country setting, 2 km. west of Winchester, Ont. Phone (613) 774-0207.

Classifieds

Anniversaries

1956 September 7 1996

With joy and thankfulness to our heavenly Father, we are happy to announce the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

BILL and WILLY VANDER HEIDE
(nee KNEGT)

May the Lord continue to bless you in the years to come.

Congratulations and much love from your children and grandchildren:

Clarence & Annette Vander Heide — St. Catharines, Ont.
Bill Vander Heide — Dunnville, Ont.
Bob & Lorraine Vander Heide — Wellandport, Ont.
Margaret & Huite Bruinsma — Dunnville, Ont.
Betty & Tom Elgersma — Smithville, Ont.
Patricia & Bill Burgoyne — Welland, Ont.

and 20+ grandchildren.

Friends and relatives are invited to celebrate at an open house in Wellandport Chr. School gym from 2:00 - 4:30 p.m., on Saturday, Sept. 7, 1996. Best wishes only.

Home address: 4141 Canboro Rd., RR#3, Wellandport, ON L0R 2J0

1946 1996

ABE and JACKIE WAMSTEEKER

were married 50 years ago in Pynacker, (ZH), the Neth., on Sept. 4, 1946.

This union was blessed by God above.

Six children they received to cherish and to love

Peter & Wilma Wamsteeker — Mississauga, Ont.
Richard, Darlene, Anthony
Adrian & Tina Wamsteeker — Meaford, Ont.
Melanie & Paul, Skip
Henry & Jeannette Myderwyk — Cambridge, Ont.
Kerry, Jodie
Rex & Leah Wamsteeker — Hagersville, Ont.
Nathan, Wendie, Leslie, Katie
Shirley Wamsteeker — Cambridge, Ont.
Natasha
Henry & Yvonne Westerman — Courtice, Ont.
Colleen, Justine

Open house to be held in the auditorium of the Zion Chr. Ref. Church, 409 Adelaide Ave. E., Oshawa, Ont., on Sept. 7, 1996, from 2:30-4:30 p.m., D.V.

Home address: 237 Thomas St., Oshawa, ON L1J 1M2

Obituaries

"The Lord is my light and my salvation"

October 6, 1915 - August 7, 1996

On Wednesday, August 7, 1996, the Lord took home to be with him in glory our father, grandfather and great-grandfather

JOHN DE WEERD

at the age of 80.

Husband of the late Alice De Weerd who passed away on November 11, 1989.

He will be sadly missed by:

Grace & Martin Duimering — Moorefield, Ont.
Pat Drost — Kitchener, Ont.
John & Mary De Weerd — Alma, Ont.
Lucy & Dick Eigenbrood — Simcoe, Ont.
Alice & John Luth — Drayton, Ont.
Ann & Ryan Van Til — Moorefield, Ont.

Loved by 23 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by his son Roelof in infancy, his son-in-law Herman Drost, and his two brothers Roelof and Hendrik.

The funeral service was held on Friday, August 9, 1996, in the Chr.Ref.Church in Drayton, Ont.

Feb.28, 1911 July 8, 1996

Our gracious, covenant God called home His child, our mother, grandmother and great-grandmother

TIETJE VAN MANEN - VAN KALSBEEK

widow of Teunis Van Manen since 1974.

We rejoice, knowing that she is now in the presence of her Savior, whom she loved.

Lovingly remembered by her children:

Wilma & Taede de Vries — Franeker, the Neth.
Evelyn & George Vink — Norwood, Ont.
Ina & Otto Jeeninga — Heerlen, the Neth.
Peter Van Manen — Wallaceburg, Ont.
Hans & Sadie Van Manen — Oshawa, Ont.
Mary & Lammert Huizenga — Bramalea, Ont.
John & Theresa Van Manen — Oshawa, Ont.

Ted Van Manen — Willowdale, Ont.

Loving Oma of 29 grandchildren and 20 great-grandchildren.

Survived by her sister Tjitske Ellens of Sarnia and her brother Gatse van Kalsbeek of Amersfoort, the Neth.

"...The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights."
(Habakkuk 3:17-19)

Obituaries

Psalm 84

On Saturday, July 13, 1996, the Lord took unto Himself our dear mother, grandmother and great-grandmother

GRETA ENSING
(nee ZWART-SCHOLTEN)

in her 91st year.

Comforted by the knowledge that she is forever with her Lord Jesus are:

Wim & Antonia Ensing — the Neth.
Gerry & Jane Ensing — London, Ont.
John & Bonnie Ensing — Guelph, Ont.
Henk & Inge Ensing — Guelph, Ont.
Teresa & Walter Schroeder — Burnaby, B.C.
George & Manja Ensing — Guelph, Ont.

and 21 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren.

The funeral took place on Tuesday, July 16, 1996, at the First Chr. Ref. Church, Guelph, Ont.

Correspondence address: c/o H. Ensing, 5416 Wellington Rd.39, Guelph, ON N1H 6J2

"O Master let me walk with Thee"

Suddenly, on August 5, 1996, the Lord called into His Glory,

GERRIT HENDRIK GROOTENS

dear husband of Hennie Grootens-Slotman and loving father of their three children: Gert, Erik, Martiene.

Correspondence address for Hennie:
Lijsterbesstraat 2, 7731 VG Ommen, The Netherlands.

Also very saddened by the sudden death of Gerrit, our son-in-law, brother-in-law and uncle are:

Fred & Margaret Slotman
Rhea & Bill Brunsveld and children
Betty & Albert Hovingh
Bernice & Tim Robson and children

We are all comforted by the assurance that Gerrit is now at home with his Lord whom he loved dearly.

Correspondence address for the Slotman family:
169 West St., Smithville, ON L0R 2A0

Church News

Christian Reformed Church

Calls accepted:

— to Mountainview CRC, Grimsby, Ont., Rev. Jerry J. Hoytema of First CRC, Guelph, Ont.

Calls declined:

— to Immanuel CRC, Hamilton, Ont., Cand. Peter Janssens.

Take action!
Place an ad in our
Business Directory.

Job Opportunities

Social Service Work - Mutual Support Systems, a parent model network of rural group homes in the Niagara Peninsula for children experiencing emotional and behavioral difficulties, invites applications for the position of **Child Care Worker.**

The responsibilities of this **live-in position include involvement in educational programming, scheduling daily routines, and child supervision**, within a family structured environment. Position includes salary and benefits package. Please submit resume to **Personnel Manager, Mutual Support Systems, P.O.Box 397, Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0 or call (905) 892-4332.**

Wellingstone Christian Home is located in the **Hamilton** area and looking for a full-time live-in superintendent for their 52 unit seniors apartment complex. A 2-bedroom apartment is available for interested party. For full job description details and remuneration package, please contact **Mrs. Emily Prins (905) 692-4554.**

Personal

Widower, 59 years young, would like to meet lady in her late 40s to mid 50s. Preferably from the London, Ont. area. A picture with your letter may be nice but not necessary. May the Lord give you the freedom to reply. **File #2652, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St.Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.**

Attractive, full-figured, active 55-year-old **seeking Christian companion** for long-term relationship, **friendship first.** Call **Barbara at (905) 774-6147.**

Active **single 40-year-old blonde,** loves sports and church activities, seeking male with similar age and interests. **Call Eve at (905) 774-4356.**

Christian widow in 60s would like to correspond with **Christian man, mid-60s to early 70s.** Likes reading, good music, cozy home life. Dislikes loneliness. **Please write to: File #2653, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd. St.Catharines, ON L2W 1A1**

Accommodation

Christian couple, relocating from Belleville, **seeking two- or three-bedroom rental unit** for October 1, 1996 in the **Niagara region.** Would also be willing to house-sit for a period of time. Please call **(613) 968-3437.**

For rent: Apartments. Redeemer College may have available some furnished 2- and 4-bedroom apartments from September 1996 - August 15, 1997. **Can be rented per day, week or month at very reasonable rates.** No lease required. Please call **(905) 648-2131 ext. #260 or #290.**

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One- or two-bedroom residences **with full services provided, in the Niagara Peninsula area.**
Spacious residences, full housekeeping, European and Canadian cooking. Dutch and English spoken.
For more info. call **(905) 945-5712 or (905) 945-6267.**

Wellingstone Christian Home is a 52-unit seniors apartment complex located in the **Hamilton** area. At present we have two 2-bedroom units available on a life lease basis. One unit is located on the ground floor and the other unit on the second floor. For further information or application form please contact **Mrs. Emily Prins (905) 692-4554.**

Attention McMaster Students!
3-Bedr. furnished apartment. Suitable for 2 or 3 females. With security, close to bus, 15 min. from campus. Must be Christian, non-smoker. Have references ready regarding cleanliness and carefulness; even from mother will do.
Call (905) 525-8268

Personal

Widow, 72 years old, likes companion her age or to 75 years old. Writing OK. Please write to **File #2650, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.**

For Sale

Purebred Bouvier Des Flandres CKC reg. pups from champion Am. and Can. lines, black & fawn, male & female. Ear, dews, & tails done. Ready Sept. 16-20, $650. **Gentle with children!** Intruders beware! **Call 905-628-5624.**

Classifieds

Job Opportunities

The **Canadian Foodgrains Bank** is a partnership of thirteen church-related agencies will provide a reliable channel for relief and development aid to food insecure countries.

POSITION AVAILABLE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The successful applicant will administer the programs and policies of the Foodgrains Bank, and negotiate and secure funding and commodities from government and other agencies for use in overseas relief and development work of the member churches.

Qualifications:

1. An active Christian commitment.
2. Demonstrated leadership ability and interpersonal skills.
3. Demonstrated competence in the area of administration and organization development.
4. Familiarity with global issues, food needs and resources.
5. An understanding of international relief and development work, overseas experience, and international commodity exchange experience would be assets.

This is a four-year renewable term. Full job description supplied on request.

Apply in writing with resume to:
Mr. Gordon Miles, Chair
Canadian Foodgrains Bank
400-280 Smith Street
P.O. Box 767
Winnipeg, MB R3C 2L4

Deadline: **October 1, 1996**

Canadian Foodgrains Bank
A Christian Response to Hunger

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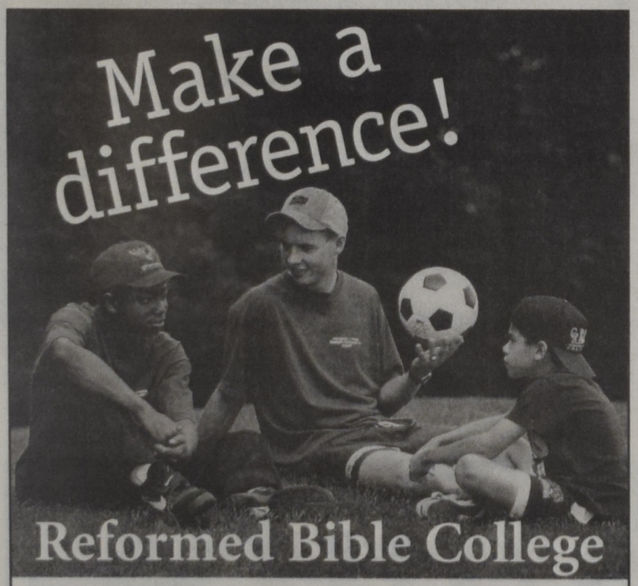

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DUNCAN-CKAY	10am	1500
Burns Lake-CFLD	9:15am	1400
Kitimat-CKTK	8:30am	1230
Osoyoos-CJOR	8:00 am	1490
Penticton-CKOR	8:00 am	800
Port Alberni-CJAV	7:00 pm	1240
Prince George-CIRX	7:00am	94.3
Princeton- CHOR	8:00 am	1400
Smithers-CFBV	9:15am	1230
Summerland-CHOR	8:00 am	1450
Vancouver-CJVB	7:00 am	1470
Vancouver-(fm)	7:00 am	103.3
Vernon-CJIB	9:30pm	940

ALBERTA

Brooks-CIBQ	8:00am	1340
Edson-CJYR	10:00am	970
Ft. McMurray-CJOK	8:30 am	1230
High River-CHRB	6:30 pm	1280
St. Albert-CHMG	8:00 am	104.9

SASKATCHEWAN

Estevan-CJSL	8:00am	1280
Weyburn-CFSL	8:00am	1190

MANITOBA

Altona-CFAM	9:30am	950
Steinbach-CHSM	9:30am	1250
Winnipeg-CKJS	9:15am	810

ONTARIO

Atikokan-CFAK	9:30am	1240
Chatham-CFCO	6:00 am	630
Fort Frances -CFOB	9:30 am	640
Guelph-CJOY	8:30am	1460
Hamilton-CHAM	7:30am	820
Kapuskasing-CKAP	9:00am	580
Kingston-WLKC	7:30 a.m	100.7
Newmarket-CKDX	9:30am	88.5
Oshawa-CKAR	8:00am	1350
Owen Sound-CFOS	10:30am	560
Pembroke-CHVR	10:00am	1350
St.Catharines-CKTB	7:30pm	610
Sarnia-CHOK	7:30am	1070
Stratford-CJCS	8:45am	1240
Windsor--CKLW	8:30am	580
Wingham-CKNX	10:30am	920
Woodstock-CKDK (fm)	8:00am	102.3

NEW BRUNSWICK

Saint John-CHSJ	9:30am	700

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Charlottetown-CFCY	7:00am	630

NOVA SCOTIA

Digby-CKDY	6:00am	1420
Kentville-CKEN	8:30am	1490
Middleton-CKAD	8:30am	1350
New Glasgow-CKEC	7:30am	1320
Sydney-CJCB	8:00am	1270
Weymouth-CKDY	8:30am	103.1
Windsor-CFAB	8:30am	1450

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Cornwall-CFIX	9:30am	1170
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Classifieds

Miscellaneous

BROCK CAMPUS MINISTRIES

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Going to Brock University? Stop by and say hello to the new CRC chaplain, Peter Schuurman. He is located at Campus Ministries, Decew Residence 202, phone extension 3134, (home 704-1778, e-mail: pschuurm@spartan.ac.brocku.ca). If you need help getting settled, or are interested in getting involved in campus ministries, give him a call! There will also be an opportunity for students, friends and family to meet him on **Wednesday, September 11, 7 p.m.**, in the campus ministry centre. Free pizza!

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Miscellaneous

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Belleville: CJLX-FM 92.3 FM
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Kingston: CFRC-FM 101.9 FM
Zondag 12:00 middag

Send your questions to **Peter and Marja.** Confidentiality is assured.

Events

HURON CAMPUS MINISTRY
of Classis Huron

The Church in the Woods
Waterloo Christian Reformed Church

warmly invites all new Waterloo-area students, their parents and friends to a

STUDENT WELCOME SERVICE

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1996, at 10:30 a.m.

After the service, information about Huron Campus Ministry and Grace Christian Fellowship at the University of Waterloo will be presented and an excellent luncheon provided.

Please contact **Chaplain Graham E. Morbey at (519) 886-1474 or (519) 884-1970, ext. 2739,** for further information and assistance.

The Waterloo Christian Reformed Church is located at 209 Bearinger Road, Waterloo, Ont.

*The **Guelph Christian Reformed Churches** and **Immanuel Christian Fellowship** invite University and college students with their families for worship and fellowship **September 8, 1996, at** **10 a.m. — New Life Christian Reformed, 400 Victoria N.** **10 a.m. — First Guelph Christian Reformed, 287 Water St.** All students, their parents and friends are invited to a barbecue at 12 noon at **First Guelph Christian Reformed Church.***

Immanuel Christian Fellowship (a campus student fellowship) welcomes new and returning students to join us on Wednesday evenings in Room 334 University Centre, 5:00-7:30 p.m. For more information contact: ***Rev. Ed DenHaan, Campus Minister*** ***(519) 824-4120, ext. 2392*** ***Tanya Kooger tkooger@uoguelph.ca***

Welcome to Guelph. Lets get acquainted!

Calendar of Events

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

Aug. 31-Sept. 2 Reunion of the YPS, First CRC, **Toronto, Ont.,** on the occasion of the 40th anniversary. Info.: (416) 225-7376 or (416) 225-5217 (#).

Sept. 8 Welcome service for Waterloo-area students (Huron Campus Ministry), 10:30 a.m., Waterloo CRC, 209 Bearinger Rd., **Waterloo**, Ont. Info.: (519) 886-1474. (#)

Sept. 8 University of Guelph special student services at 10 a.m. in both New Life CRC (400 Victoria N.) and First CRC (287 Water St.), **Guelph,** Ont. All students, parents and friends are invited to a barbecue at 12 noon at First CRC. Info.: (519) 824-4120, ext.2392. (#)

Sept. 14 LDCSS Alumni Picnic, 2-6 p.m. (rain or shine) at the school, **London,** Ont. Info.: (519) 455-4360 or fax: (519) 455-4364 (#)

Sept. 21 Annual "Camp Shalom Fall Fair," 10 a.m.-4 p.m., R.R.4, **Cambridge**, Ont. Admission: canned goods for the local food bank. Lots to do for young and old, and great food! Watch for ad. For info. call John and Irene at (905) 689-8062 (#).

Sept. 21 Ashley Cleveland, 1996 Grammy award winner, in concert, 8 p.m., Jubilee Fellowship CRC, 13 Wilholme Dr., **St.Catharines**, Ont. With guitarist Kenny Greenberg. Doors open at 7 p.m. For tickets call Judi at (905) 892-6434.

Sept. 25 Celebration and open house in honor of the retirement of Rev. and Mrs. Peter and Anne De Bruyne, 7:30 p.m., Mountainview CRC, **Grimsby**, Ont. Rev. De Bruyne will preach his farewell sermon at 9:30 a.m., on Sunday, **Sept. 29**, at Shalom Manor, **Grimsby**, Ont. (#)

Sept. 28 "Praise and Worship Conference" with Grace and Colleen, First CRC, 310 Kingscourt Ave., **Kingston, Ont.** Info.: (613) 542-8350 or 389-5050.

Oct. 3 Open house and welcome for Rev. and Mrs. George and Frieda Van Arragon, 2:45 p.m., Shalom Manor, **Grimsby,** Ont. Rev. Van Arragon will be installed as Chaplain at 9:30 a.m., on Sunday, Oct. 6, at Shalom Manor, **Grimsby,** Ont.

Oct. 6 Dutch worship service led by Rev. Jerry J. Hoytema, 3 p.m., CRC, **Ancaster**, Ont.

Oct.30-Nov.2 "Free to Serve," celebrations will be held **Oct. 30:** Jubilee Auditorium, **Edmonton**, Alta., and **Nov. 2:** Redeemer College Auditorium, **Ancaster**, Ont. For details, see ad in C.C., July 5/96. (#)

Nov. 1 "Christian Festival Concert," by the choirs and brass of the Ontario Chr. Music Assembly, directed by Leendert Kooij. At 8 p.m., Roy Thomson Hall, **Toronto**, Ont. Also featuring Andre Knevel and Sander Van Marion (organ and piano) and Marjorie Ginczinger, soprano. A truly exciting event! Tickets/info.: (416) 636-9779 (#).

Nov. 10 Dutch worship service led by Rev. Riemer Praamsma, 3 p.m., CRC, **Ancaster**, Ont.

Dec. 15 Dutch worship service led by Rev. Peter Van Egmond, 3 p.m., CRC, **Ancaster,** Ont.

Retirement
Rev. Peter W. De Bruyne

After 34 years of ministry in the Chr. Ref. Church, **Rev. Peter W. De Bruyne will be retiring as Chaplain of Shalom Manor.** Family, friends and former parishioners are invited to attend an *Evening of Thanksgiving*, which will be held in honor of Rev. and Mrs. De Bruyne, at the Mountainview CRC, Grimsby, Ont., on **September 25, 1996**, at **7:30 p.m.** Correspondence to be addressed to: **Nellie VanderVelde, 12 Bartlett Ave., Grimsby, ON L3M 4N5**

News

Immigrants in Canada from the Netherlands

A profile by Statistics Canada based on the 1991 census

Stan de Jong

OTTAWA — With the results from the recently conducted 1996 census coming in, Statistics Canada has just published a series of 15 profiles which examine the largest immigrant communities in Canada using information from the 1991 census and from the the administrative files of Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Some interesting highlights regarding Dutch immigrants:

* In 1991 there were 129,165 people who were born in the Netherlands but now live in Canada, only three per cent of all immigrants. (Children born to such people are, of course, not included in the immigrant population.)

* A high number (87 per cent) of those have become Canadian citizens and most of them (57 per cent) live in Ontario; 19 per cent live in B.C., 14 per cent in Alberta and 10 are scattered throughout the remainder of Canada.

* The Dutch tend to like rural areas more than other immigrants do. Only 54 per cent live within a "census metropolitan area" such as Toronto, Vancouver, Edmonton, Hamilton — well below the 84 per cent figure for all immigrants.

* Dutch immigrants are older, on average, than the overall immigrant and Canadian-born populations, and 92 per cent of them can conduct a conversation in English.

* Though the majority religion in the Netherlands has for some time been Roman Catholic, 56 per cent of Dutch Canadian immigrants reported they are Protestant; 27 per cent said they are Catholic and one per cent are affiliated with some other religion.

* Immigrants from the Netherlands are more likely than either other immigrants or people born in Canada to live with their immediate family. Also, Dutch immigrant women generally have more children than either other immigrants or native-born Canadians.

* Dutch immigrants are less likely than other immigrants or native-born Canadians to have a university degree. In fact, they are more likely to have less than a Grade 9 education. In the same vein, Dutch young adults are less likely than other young adults in Canada to be attending school.

* Dutch immigrant men are much more likely than other immigrant men and Canadian-born men to be employed. (The percentage of Dutch women employed in 1991 was almost the same as immigrant and native-born women.) Dutch immigrant incomes, on average, are somewhat higher than other Canadian incomes. In 1990 the average Dutch immigrant income was $27,800, while for all immigrants it was $25,300 and for native-born Canadians, $23,700.

CC FILES

The Dutch village of Aarlanderveen in silhouette in winter.

To obtain a copy of Profile on the Netherlands *write to: Public Affairs Branch, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 19th Floor, 365 Laurier Ave. West, Ottawa, ON K1A 1L1. Fax: (613) 954-2221. Internet address: http://cicnet.ingenia.com.*

Hong Kong Christians must face reality of 1997

HONG KONG (EP) — Hong Kong's Christians are facing a major change in 1997, and the church should help them accept this reality, says a prominent Hong Kong theologian. The British colony will revert to Chinese control next year.

"Negative thinking is no good for Hong Kong people nor for Christians," Lo Lung-kwong said in an interview with *News and Views* which is published by the Hong Kong Christian Council (HKCC).

Beijing has promised "business as usual" when the British crown colony reverts to Chinese rule on July 1, 1997, but anxieties about the Communist takeover of the Asian economic power have led an estimated one in six Hong Kong citizens to secure foreign passports or right of residence in other countries. Lo, who is chairperson of the HKCC social concerns committee, believes that "the church as a whole and many Christians will remain in Hong Kong."

About 10 per cent of Hong Kong's 5.9 million people are Christians. There are an estimated 900 Protestant congregations in the colony.

Lo said the church has an important role to play in encouraging those who stay in Hong Kong "to face the reality and to stay with a sense of mission, not because they have no choice, not just that they are stuck in this dilemma. For me, I would like to be with the church and with the Hong Kong people, and I believe our Lord is with us."

Lo believes the Bible calls on Christians to "have a co-operative relationship with the state" while remembering that loyalty to God comes before loyalty to a government. "We don't want the state power to intervene in the church for their own purpose, and we also don't want the church to use the government power to achieve its own goals, like what happened in medieval times."

The international community must watch the takeover carefully, said Lo, "to see whether human rights and freedom have been ... violated."

Christopher Patten, Great Britain's last governor of Hong Kong, has urged vigilance to ensure that religious freedom remains intact under the new regime. Patten told *Asia Focus*, a Hong Kong-based Catholic newsletter, that Hong Kong's agreements with China guarantee religious freedom, but added, "It will be important ... for people to make it absolutely clear they expect those undertakings to be followed in the spirit and to the letter. If there were any attempt to redefine religious freedom in ways which constrained it, then people would have to speak out."

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News

Christian Conference on chastity aims to be antidote to secular sexuality conference

Trudy Bartels

GUELPH, Ont. — The First Annual Guelph Conference on the Family & Morality was held June 17 and 18 in Guelph, Ont. And it was a "first."

DAVE BAIN

Marilyn Bergeron, founder of the Canadian Alliance for Chastity

The conference, "Sex & Sensibility," organized by concerned citizens of Guelph and surrounding area, was held concurrently with the 18th Conference on Human Sexuality (the largest in North America), staged annually by the University of Guelph. The University of Guelph conference is attended by large numbers of educators and health care workers and is intended to present "comprehensive sex education" to public school children. Proponents of chastity and abstinence, however, feel they are selectively discriminated against on the grounds that they are homophobic and heterosexist. Focus on the Family and several other groups were barred from this year's conference.

Determined to end what they see as an imbalance in sex education in Canada, a group of concerned citizens proceeded to plan for a conference that would present the option of chastity as a safe and healthy lifestyle. A taskforce was formed, with Alun Baker as chairperson and Focus on the Family co-ordinator. Space for the conference was procured at the College Inn at the edge of University of Guelph campus.

earning to make the ght choices

Conference speakers were Marilyn Bergeron and William Gairdner. Bergeron is a graduate of McGill University and Stanford University in English literature, and in the sports field has earned a silver medal at the Pan American Games of 1963. In a variety of international sports events Gairdner placed in the top 10, including hurdles and cross-country skiing.

Marylin Bergeron spoke on June 17 to a mixed audience of about 150 people on the topic "Dating and Relating in the '90s." She explained that the use of the word chastity, rather than abstinence, is deliberate. Abstinence is a negative word and could be confused with the idea of Outer Course, an idea that encourages sexual activities except vaginal intercourse.

Bergeron asserted that today's youth will make the right choices, provided the dangers of teen sex and the benefits of chastity are creatively presented to them. Young people need to be taught:

* how to say No to sex;
* how to communicate effectively;
* how to express affection appropriately;
* how to date creatively.

Love, not sex, is the centre

School officials focus on "safe" sex in a futile attempt to stem the tide of teen pregnancies and sexual disease that have mushroomed, since the start of the sexual revolution 30 years ago, Bergeron said. Her slogan is, "Save sex for marriage." She promotes chastity as a healthy lifestyle that fosters not only self-respect and respect for one's partner, but also frees young people from undue sexual and psychological pressure, worry about unwanted pregnancy and sexual disease.

Bergeron stressed that it also is possible to start over again if you have failed to sexually restrain yourself. "That is what secondary virginity means: starting over again."

Bergeron likened teen sex to a dangerous road on which society has removed the warning signs. She urged educators and parents to "put the danger signs back up." Bergeron warned, "If we do not clearly communicate to our youth that sex is not the centre of the universe, rather *love* is [she made clear that the two are not necessarily synonymous] we will fail our children."

In William Gairdner's talk the next day, he asserted that many modern educators are "good people with bad ideas." They are idealists, but misguided. He warned of social engineering that is anti-family and designed to give more and more control over children to government and institutions.

Still lots of love and care

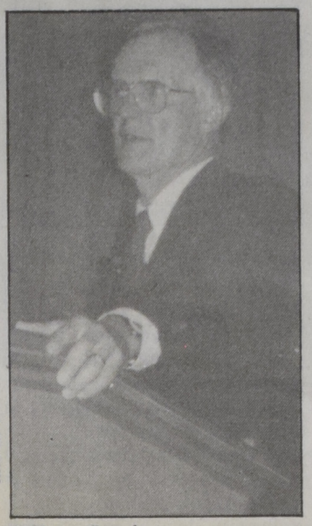
The family is still doing "pretty good," Gairdner argued. "Yes, there is violence and abuse, but lots of love is around that the media does *not* report."

Gairdner also pointed out the fact that only the *problems* are being studied in universities: marriage break-ups, abuse, crime — "the sickness of society." That 85 per cent of children still live in their parents' home, and that there still is lots of care and love around, is simply overlooked.

At question period one person asked: "What is the role of the organized church?"

Gairdner's answer: "Not in politics. The church should deal with the 'garbage of the soul.' We need a revival before we make real inroads in other areas. To talk about the basic human needs is political."

Both Bergeron and Gairdner stressed that good sex education



PAUL JEFFS

William Gairdner

material is available, such as Teen Aid and Teen Ed. They'd like to see citizens be involved in getting these materials into the public school system as well as into churches.

Support for the conference came from ministers and laypeople from numerous denominations — Catholic, Pentecostal, Christian & Missionary Alliance, Evangelical Missionary, Anglican, Presbyterian, Christian Reformed and Baptist. About 50 business people, Christian and non-Christian, provided financial backing. Funds also were raised through free-will offerings and admission fees.

Alliance for Chastity, Focus on the Family, Jewels for Jesus, the Right to Life Association and Beginnings Crisis Pregnancy Centre, Guelph, offered information and literature at the conference.

Thinkbit

"Good will, like a good name, is won by many acts — and lost by one."

On the back of a dentist's appointment card

News Digest

Pregnant drug users can be arrested in S.C.

COLUMBIA, S.C. (EP) — Pregnant women who use drugs can be prosecuted for child abuse, the South Carolina Supreme Court has ruled. The 3-2 ruling on July 15 is the first of its kind in the U.S. For the majority, Justice Jean Toal said, "South Carolina has long recognized that viable fetuses are persons holding certain legal rights and privileges." The American Civil Liberties Union will appeal the ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Acadian culture in France

OTTAWA — Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy says his ministry will contribute $25,000 to organize a major event promoting Acadian culture in a village in the Rhone-Alpes region of France, Sept. 30 to Oct. 6.

Axworthy says "culture is a key element of our foreign policy" and important for establishing and maintaining international relations. Sixty craftspeople and artists from Acadian communities in the four Atlantic provinces have been chosen to showcase Acadia's culture, tourist attractions and food (including seafood and maple products).

A first in state case re: gay discrimination

BOSTON, Mass. (EP) — The owner of a now-defunct bar in Boston has been ordered to pay $30,000 to two lesbians and a gay man for throwing them out because he objected to their displays of physical affection. The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination ruling is the first charging anti-gay discrimination in a place of public accommodation.

The ruling noted that heterosexuals were also kissing and dancing together without being evicted, and said businesses which are open to the public cannot discriminate against homosexuals.

The defendants said they went to the former Stocks and Bonds club on Oct. 6, 1990, to test the law. They engaged in what they called a "visibility action" deliberately designed to provoke a response.